



# Leninist Theory of Socialist Revolution and the Contemporary World

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ЛЕНИНСКАЯ ТЕОРИЯ СОЦИАЛИСТИЧЕСКОЙ  
РЕВОЛЮЦИИ  
И СОВРЕМЕННОСТЬ

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## FOREWORD

V. I. Lenin devoted considerable attention in his works to the theory of socialist revolution, which is a major component of Marxism. He led the Russian workers to victory in the world's first triumphant socialist revolution, which initiated an epoch of transition from capitalism to socialism. It is due to his immense contribution to the theory of proletarian revolution that the theory of socialist revolution has come to be known as *Leninist* in contemporary Marxist literature.

The Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the fraternal Marxist-Leninist parties draw on the Leninist theoretical heritage in developing their philosophy of socialist revolution.

Both the ideologists of the bourgeoisie and the Right- and "Left"-wing revisionists try to demean the theory, to prove it is outmoded, delimit the historical and geographical bounds of its impact and divide the integral Marxist-Leninist revolutionary theory into a series of "models" constructed on a nationalistic and pseudo-scientific foundation.

But the situation today shows they are wrong to think that the class struggle will mellow in capitalist states. In fact, just the opposite is happening: social conflicts are extending and deepening, thereby dispelling such anti-communist shibboleths as "class harmony", "social partnership" and "class collaboration". The situation was summed up in the Resolution passed at the 24th Congress of the CPSU in 1971 on the Central Committee Report: "The attempts of capitalism to

adapt itself to the new conditions do not lead to its stabilisation as a social system. The general crisis of capitalism continues to deepen. State-monopoly development results in an aggravation of all the contradictions of capitalism, and in the rise of the anti-monopoly struggle. The leading force in this struggle is the working class. . . . The large-scale actions by the working class and the working masses herald fresh class battles which could lead to fundamental social changes, to the establishment of the power of the working class in alliance with the other sections of the working people."<sup>1</sup> The irreversible course of history and the experience of world socialism and the workers' and national liberation movements provide fresh evidence of the historical veracity of Lenin's theory of socialist revolution which expresses the basic needs of this day and age.

<sup>1</sup> 24th Congress of the CPSU, Moscow, 1971, pp. 214-15.

## GENESIS OF THEORY OF SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

The founders of Marxism-Leninism saw the ultimate aim of the socialist liberation movement in creating, by deliberate revolutionary action, a society in which the harmonious development of each person would be a precondition for the complete and free development of everyone.

The path of mankind into the communist future lies through socialist revolution which is destined to replace the moribund capitalist system by socialism. The Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia initiated this social process of radically changing the world; it is the paramount task of the working class and all other working people led by Communists to complete it. How they do so has been shown by the Marxist-Leninist theory of socialist revolution which explains scientifically the inevitability, paths, conditions, motive forces, forms and consequences of revolutionary social change. The historic importance of the theory today stems from the very nature of our age—that of the transition to socialism; no longer are theoretical questions merely being posed, they are being implemented in direct revolutionary practice and they accord with the practical requirements of the liberation struggle.

The theory of socialist revolution is a major component of Marxism because it reveals the laws of revolutionary change, the victory of the working class in every country and the entry of every nation into the socialist phase of communism. Being a powerful theoretical weapon of the working class in its desire to change the world, it exerts increasing



influence upon the destiny of humanity. As more and more people become aware of the theory, it becomes an ever greater mobilising force in the historic struggle for the universal triumph of the grand ideals of scientific communism.

The formation of the Marxist theory of proletarian revolution dates from the 1840's. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels provided in *The German Ideology* a comprehensive argument for the need for and inevitability of communist revolution. They later elaborated upon the basic principles of the theory and provided it with a methodological foundation.

Lenin developed the theory further towards the end of the 19th century; it was under his leadership that the socialist revolution prevailed in one of the world's largest countries.

The theory has since been further developed by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the fraternal communist parties and the world communist movement in circumstances marked by a strong upsurge of socialism, its emergence beyond the bounds of a single country, socialist revolutions in a number of states and the formation of the world socialist community. The Leninist theory of socialist revolution has received its most profound development in present-day circumstances in the decisions of congresses and in the Programme of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and in the principal documents of the world communist movement.

### 1. Marx and Engels: Proletarian Revolution

Marx and Engels propounded the theory of socialist revolution because a need had arisen for it in the international labour movement. The developing liberation movement required a scientific theory of revolutionary social change whose creation had been necessitated by certain material and social prerequisites. They developed it at a time when the capitalist mode of production existed in many countries, when contradictions within this system were already manifest and when the working class had entered the arena of class struggle and had demonstrated its revolutionary potential in several revolutionary battles. Furthermore, the natural and social sciences had reached a stage where a new and really

scientific dialectical and materialist philosophy was called for.

Marx and Engels, however, lived in an age of pre-monopoly capitalism, when the objective prerequisites for socialism were only just being formed. The 1848 Revolution and the Paris Commune showed, as Engels wrote in 1895, "that the state of economic development of the Continent at that time was not, by a long way, ripe for the elimination of capitalist production".<sup>1</sup> Lenin, too, spoke of this in his "Socialism and War": "Half a century ago," he wrote in 1915, "the proletariat was too weak; the objective conditions for socialism had not yet matured. . . ."<sup>2</sup> In his book *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1916), Lenin said that capitalism had completely matured for a victorious socialist revolution only when it had entered the imperialist era.

In revealing the laws of capitalist development, Marx and Engels laid the basis for a scientific theory of socialist revolution which has retained its vitality to the present day.

The following should be regarded as the major propositions of the Marxist theory of proletarian revolution: the role of social revolutions in history as powerful engines of historical progress, as an instrument for replacing moribund socio-economic formations by new and progressive orders; the common people as the major motive force of revolution; the historical inevitability of proletarian revolution and the universal historic role of the proletariat as both the gravedigger of capitalism and the creator of communist society; the decisive part played by the revolutionary proletarian party in socialist revolution; the international character of proletarian revolution; the international unity of the revolutionary proletariat as a precondition for its triumph; the essential differences between proletarian revolution and all previous revolutions in general and bourgeois revolutions in particular; the involvement of peasants in proletarian revolution and the construction of a new socialist society; the connection between the national liberation struggle and the fight for socialism; the proletarian dictatorship as the pro-

<sup>1</sup> K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* (in three volumes), Vol. 1, Introduction by Engels ("The Class Struggles in France"), Moscow, 1969, pp. 191-92.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 313.



duct and agent of socialist revolution; the destructive and constructive functions of proletarian revolution; the demolition of the bourgeois state apparatus; peaceful and non-peaceful forms of proletarian revolution.

Marx and Engels gave a thorough analysis of capitalism as the last form of human exploitation, explained the objective laws of its appearance and development and showed that it was doomed to die.

In their historical approach to an analysis of capitalism, they made it clear that capitalist society was a necessary, not a chance, stage in human development, that, by comparison with feudalism, capitalism was historically a progressive social system. By breaking the shackles of feudalism, it had given a mighty impetus to the forces of production. In their famous *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, Marx and Engels wrote that in less than a century of domination, the bourgeoisie had created more powerful forces of production than all preceding generations taken together. Yet, by creating these vast forces of production, bourgeois society had prepared its own demise. At a certain stage of development, capitalist relations of production come into conflict with the social nature of production, become too limited for the forces of production and change from being forms of their development into their fetters. The conflict between developing forces of production and outmoded capitalist relations of production is the economic basis for socialist revolution. This conflict can only be resolved by the destruction of capitalism and the revolutionary replacement of capitalist by socialist relations of production.

While in *The German Ideology*, *Manifesto of the Communist Party* and elsewhere, Marx and Engels substantiated the inevitability of proletarian revolution by revealing the general laws of historical development, in *Capital* Marx provides the fundamental economic basis for the law of the revolutionary transformation of capitalist into socialist society.

Marx and Engels exposed the antagonistic contradictions of capitalism and showed how the social character of production was singularly unsuited to the private form of appropriation. The forces of production are capable of providing for all members of society; but in bourgeois society

vicious exploitation and impoverishment of working people and the sumptuous way of life of a small band of owners of the basic means of production exist side by side.

The bourgeoisie had fulfilled its historic mission as a class, and its further economic and political dominance became a severe brake on social progress and a source of numerous catastrophes. That is why Marx and Engels claimed the time was ripe to expropriate capitalist property. While maintaining that capitalism was doomed, they said it would not die automatically. The outmoded reactionary classes would use every means at their disposal to defend capitalist relations of production with the desperation born of the doomed. In order to destroy the bourgeois system one had to break the resistance of capitalism, to promote politically conscious revolutionary actions by the working people and to bring down capitalism by a proletarian socialist revolution. As early as 1844, Marx had written that "socialism cannot arrive without revolution".<sup>1</sup>

The founders of Marxism irrefutably showed that the proletariat was the force destined to destroy bourgeois relations of production. Capitalist development itself creates and unifies that force; by socialising labour, capitalism simultaneously nurtures its own grave-digger, instructs and unifies the working class, inspires it to revolutionary combat, engenders anger in it with the capitalist system, unites it into mass armies capable of expropriating the expropriators, of seizing political power, of taking the means of production from the band of usurpers, of transferring them to the whole of society and, thereby, guaranteeing a powerful upsurge in the forces of production for the benefit of the working people. The proletariat cannot free itself from the capitalist yoke without liberating the whole of society from exploitation and all forms of oppression. Marx once called the workers the only thoroughly consistent revolutionary class "that bear in their hands the regeneration of mankind."<sup>2</sup> The middle sections of bourgeois society—the peasants and urban petty bourgeoisie—fare no better; they are faced by a downturn in their fortunes, impoverishment and exploita-

<sup>1</sup> Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. I, Berlin, 1969, S. 409.

<sup>2</sup> *The General Council of the First International 1866-1868*, Moscow, 1964, p. 329.



tion. The real answer to their problems lies not so much in trying to retain their former status within the framework of capitalism or in a return to pre-capitalist times, as in a concerted struggle together with the proletariat against capitalism. These classes, as Marx and Engels stated, are only revolutionary to the extent that in the workers' struggle against the bourgeoisie they reject their own viewpoint and side with the proletariat.

The utopian socialists regarded the working class only as a mass of downtrodden and impoverished people whose sufferings and poverty evoked sympathy and compassion. But they failed to appreciate that only the working class can lead all working people out of the capitalist wilderness to socialism, that no other class is capable of fulfilling this great historic mission. The Marxist treatment of the historic role of the proletariat is one of the greatest discoveries in the social sciences. Lenin called it the greatest discovery of Marxism: "It is to the great historic merit of Marx and Engels that they indicated to the workers of the world their role, their task, their mission, namely, to be the first to rise in the revolutionary struggle against capital and to rally around themselves in this struggle *all* working and exploited people."<sup>1</sup>

On the basis of a profound analysis of antagonistic socio-economic formations, Marx and Engels were the first social thinkers to work out a scientifically substantiated theory of class struggle as the motive force of social development.

They strongly rejected the unreal notions of the utopian socialists that socialism could be established by persuading the ruling classes to reconstruct society along socialist lines; they also rejected all the various reformist concepts and showed that socialist revolution grew naturally out of the intensifying class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie and was, in fact, the culminating point of that struggle. Socialism could come into being only in great historic class battles.

At the same time, they opposed any adventurist playing at revolution and rash attempts to stir up a revolutionary crisis artificially. They labelled as "alchemists of revolu-

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 165.

tion" people who took such a dangerous attitude; they regarded as extremely harmful for the socialist cause any attempt "to run ahead of the process of revolutionary development, artificially to whip it up to a crisis and to make a revolution *ex promptu* without the presence of necessary conditions".<sup>1</sup> They regarded the maturation of prerequisites for revolution as an objective process. The task of proletarian revolutionaries was to make a circumspect study of economic and political development, to be able to determine whether a revolutionary crisis was present and, accordingly, to map out the workers' tactics. For the proletariat to be fully prepared to meet the revolutionary crisis growing out of the objective process of capitalist development, it had to prepare for revolution in a planned and patient way, taking account of the necessary stages of development. An example of their condemnation of voluntarism in revolutionary tactics may be cited in regard to those members of the League of Communists who at a time when the liberation movement was at a low ebb, continued with their plan to organise armed uprisings. In 1850, Marx and Engels rebuffed the sectarian group of Willich and Schapper who were urging the League to take an adventurist line and were causing a split. In subsequent years, they continued their uncompromising struggle against "playing at revolution" as they called the voluntaristic plans of various anarchistic elements. By showing that the proletarian revolution could not occur at any specific moment and that certain conditions had to be present for it to occur, they arrived at an appreciation of the specific prerequisites of revolution, the need for a revolutionary situation whose major aspects were later analysed in detail by Lenin.

While regarding every social revolution as a turning point in social development which immeasurably accelerated social progress,<sup>2</sup> Marx and Engels attributed a special role

<sup>1</sup> Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 7, S. 273.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Engels's "Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany", in which he calls revolution "a powerful agent of social and political progress...". It would, he said, "in five years cover more ground than it would have done in a century under ordinary circumstances". K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* (in three volumes), Vol. 1, p. 327.



in human destiny to the socialist revolution. They called it a gigantic historic stride in social development.

Socialist revolutions radically differed from all preceding revolutions in so far as they went deeper and wider in implementing social change; they were more popular in the sense that they involved far more working people and were more organised as far as the theoretical and political awareness of the revolutionary actions of the participants was concerned.

Marx in his work *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* stressed that proletarian revolutions were a far more protracted and profound process than bourgeois revolutions that had been completed shortly after the new classes had come to power and when the main obstacles to their economic and political dominance had been removed. The seizure of power by the revolutionary class in a proletarian revolution marked only the starting point for a radical revolutionary reconstruction of the whole political and economic structure of society. In point of fact, the proletarian revolution embraced the entire transitional period from capitalism to socialism.

As distinct from previous revolutions which had taken mainly spontaneous forms, the proletarian revolution could not occur without the revolutionary masses realising its historic mission.

Proletarian revolutions occupy a particularly important place in social development. No previous major revolutions had destroyed exploitation of man by man. At best, they had only replaced one form of exploitation by another. Only the socialist revolution would eliminate all exploitation, replace capitalist relations of production by socialist, put an end to the last form of private ownership of the means of production—i.e., bourgeois property, and replace it by socialist public ownership. The socialist revolution, therefore, would open a new era in the history of mankind, would complete the pre-history of mankind and signify the beginning of real human history.

Marx and Engels saw the great historic significance of the proletarian revolution in that it enlightened the working people, raised them to the most vigorous historical creativity, brought about a hitherto unheard-of upsurge in initia-

tive, bold beginning and creative endeavour. The working class needed revolution both to demolish the old and create the new relations of production, and to prepare itself for building socialist society. In *The German Ideology*, they explained that for the working people to obtain the communist consciousness "the alteration of men on a mass scale is necessary, an alteration which can only take place in a practical movement, a *revolution*; this revolution is necessary, therefore, not only because the *ruling* class cannot be overthrown in any other way, but also because the class *overthrowing* it can only in a revolution succeed in ridding itself of all the muck of ages and become fitted to found society anew".<sup>1</sup>

They also showed that a necessary condition for the proletariat to fulfil its historic mission was for it to be led by a revolutionary and independent class party. Marx said that "even under the most favourable political conditions all serious success of the proletariat depends upon an organisation that unites and concentrates its forces. . .".<sup>2</sup>

Marx and Engels looked upon the proletarian revolution not as a spontaneous uprising by millions of workers, but as politically conscious, highly organised, purposeful revolutionary actions that combined revolutionary enthusiasm with an iron proletarian discipline, that combined a great impassioned outburst with an understanding of the ultimate aims of struggle, that combined a selfless heroism with an unconquerable faith in the hallowed ideals of communism. Only a revolutionary proletarian party could secure this blend and thereby make the working class the leading social force that was aware of its great historic destiny. Only it could equip the proletariat with revolutionary theory, instil in the spontaneous workers' movement the ideas of scientific communism and organisation; only it could take upon itself the leadership for preparing and carrying through socialist revolution; only it was in a position to fulfil the responsible tasks as the command of the proletarian army of fighters for socialism. In 1889 Engels wrote: "For the proletariat to

<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology*, Moscow, 1964, p. 86.

<sup>2</sup> *The General Council of the First International 1866-1868*, p. 329.



be strong enough to win on the decisive day it must—and this Marx and I have been arguing ever since 1847—form a separate party distinct from all others and opposed to them, a conscious class party.”<sup>1</sup>

Marx and Engels regarded that party as the vanguard and political leader of the working class, “the resolute section of the working-class parties of every country, that section which pushes forward all others...”<sup>2</sup> It would be indissolubly connected with the working class and express its vital interests. In order to lead the workers’ struggle, the party had to be the most active and militant, the most class-conscious section of the proletariat, able to see farther than other workers, to appreciate the conditions, course and overall results of the proletarian movement, to approach the daily struggle of the proletariat from the point of view of its ultimate goal and to be the representative of “the interests of the movement as a whole”<sup>3</sup> at various stages of the struggle against the bourgeoisie. In their view, Communists should lend an international character to the labour movement by taking into account the national objectives of the working class in every country and defending the overall interests of the entire international proletariat irrespective of nationality.

While remaining true to the workers’ interests, Communists do not isolate themselves in a sectarian way from the various non-proletarian revolutionary movements. They “everywhere support every revolutionary movement against the existing social and political order of things.”<sup>4</sup> At the same time, Communists never forget the contradictory and irreconcilable nature of the interests of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, they need tirelessly to prepare the working class to fight to overthrow capitalism and to establish their own political domination as a mandatory stage on the way to communism.

<sup>1</sup> K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, Moscow, 1965, p. 409.

<sup>2</sup> K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* (in three volumes), Vol. 1, p. 120.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 137.

The directions that Marx and Engels gave to the proletarian party were the basis on which Lenin, in new circumstances, developed his integral theory of the revolutionary proletarian party of a new type.

Marx and Engels had regarded the socialist revolution not as a nationally restricted phenomenon but as a worldwide, consciously implemented revolutionary process which at one time or another, in one form or another, every nation in the world has to pass through. They had believed that the national and international interests of the proletariat were closely allied, that the international proletarian front was opposed to an international capitalist front and that the various national proletarian contingents comprised components of a single world proletarian army. This army could only be victorious when all its contingents acted in concert for “...disregard of that bond of brotherhood which ought to exist between the workmen of different countries, and incite them to stand firmly by each other in all their struggles for emancipation, will be chastised by the common discomfiture of their incoherent efforts”.<sup>1</sup> The proletariat should tirelessly fight for the national and international unity of all its sections. “Nothing but an international bond of the working classes,” Marx said, “can ever ensure their definite triumph.”<sup>2</sup> Hence the Marxist principle of proletarian internationalism and the slogan “Working Men of All Countries, Unite!”.

Marx and Engels, therefore, saw the socialist revolution as a world revolutionary process, first because it embraced all nations of the world, and second because the internationalism of revolutionary actions by the proletariat was the major condition for its triumph.

The notion of permanent revolution which they formulated had immense significance for the theory and practice of revolutionary struggle. In countries that had not had a bourgeois revolution, as Marx and Engels had indicated, the socialist revolution would be preceded by a democratic coup whose principal purpose would be to sweep away the feudal rubbish from that field of battle on which the working class was to

<sup>1</sup> *The General Council of the First International 1864-1868*, p. 286.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 329.



measure its strength against the bourgeoisie. The workers would take part in that but they should not for one minute lose sight of their ultimate interests. Their job, therefore, was "to make the revolution permanent, until all more or less possessing classes have been forced out of their position of dominance, until the proletariat has conquered state power..."<sup>1</sup> The idea of permanent revolution is central to the theory of socialist revolution. Lenin relied upon it when he elaborated his theory of the bourgeois-democratic revolution growing into socialist revolution.

Marx's idea of combining a peasant revolutionary movement with a proletarian revolution is another important ingredient in the development of the socialist revolution theory. Marx and Engels saw a paramount pledge of the victory of socialist revolution in the workers' skilled use of the revolutionary potential of the peasants—manifested both in their fight against vestiges of feudalism and in resistance to capitalist exploitation—and in the workers' ability to combine socialist revolution in the towns with a peasant war in the countryside. Marx wrote that "...the peasants find their natural ally and leader in the *urban proletariat*, whose task is the overthrow of the bourgeois order";<sup>2</sup> and that in the peasants "*... the proletarian revolution will obtain that chorus without which its solo song becomes a swan song in all peasant countries*".<sup>3</sup> A little later, in 1856, in a letter to Engels on the same question, Marx noted that "the whole thing in Germany will depend on the possibility of backing the proletarian revolution by some second edition of the Peasant War. Then the affair will be splendid..."<sup>4</sup> From this we may conclude that, first, in a general way Marx advanced the idea of an alliance between the workers and the peasants, second, that the working class should play the leading role in this alliance (the idea of proletarian hegemony in the socialist revolution) and, third, he pointed out the decisive significance of an alliance of the two largest

<sup>1</sup> K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* (in three volumes), Vol. 1, p. 179.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 482.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 484.

<sup>4</sup> K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 92.

classes in bourgeois society to bring about the victory of socialist revolution.

The founders of Marxism saw the proletarian fight for socialism in close connection with the movement for national independence. While the struggle for national liberation would encourage the struggle for socialism (by debilitating the exploiting classes of the dominant nations), the fight for socialism would inevitably lead to the elimination of national oppression. Engels had said in underlining the link in the struggle for social and national emancipation, "no nation can be free while it oppresses another".<sup>1</sup> Marx and Engels regarded the working class as an active fighter against national oppression; in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* they wrote that "in proportion as the exploitation of one individual by another is put an end to, the exploitation of one nation by another will also be put an end to. In proportion as the antagonism between classes within the nation vanishes, the hostility of one nation to another will come to an end."<sup>2</sup>

Marx's justification of the need for proletarian dictatorship was another important historical discovery and has rightly been described as a cornerstone of Marxism. Lenin believed that one could only regard oneself as a Marxist if one recognised not only class struggle but took it a step further to recognition of dictatorship of the proletariat.

The question of political power is a central issue of the proletarian revolution, as of any social revolution. In its fight to establish, develop and maintain the relations of production it requires, every ruling class relies on state power with its powerful state apparatus, armed forces, prisons, courts and other punitive agencies. In the hands of the bourgeoisie, state power is the principal means for preserving bourgeois relations of production. The only way to eliminate them is to deprive the bourgeoisie of state power and for power to be seized by the class which is interested in destroying bourgeois property and affirming socialist property. The fight to replace capitalist by socialist

<sup>1</sup> Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 18, S. 527.

<sup>2</sup> K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* (in three volumes), Vol. 1, p. 125.



production relations, therefore, is above all a political struggle for state power, for replacing bourgeois dictatorship by a dictatorship of the most revolutionary class of our age—the proletariat. Marx wrote that “between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. Corresponding to this is also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but *the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat*”.<sup>1</sup>

Born of the victorious socialist revolution, the proletarian dictatorship would subsequently become a weapon of that revolution, destined to play a decisive part in eliminating bourgeois relations and establishing socialist relations of production.

In summing up the experience of the 1848 Revolution, Marx developed the notion of the proletarian dictatorship in his conclusion that the victorious proletariat had to smash the bourgeois state machine. He showed that all previous revolutions had only improved upon the military and bureaucratic state apparatus. Once it had gained power the proletariat needed a completely different type of state power. Later, on the experience of the Paris Commune, Marx showed what exactly had to replace the smashed bourgeois state machine, in what form the proletarian dictatorship could be implemented and what would be the characteristic features and major peculiarities of the new proletarian state. If the working class were not to create such a state, it could neither carry out socialist changes, nor defend successfully the gains of the socialist revolution from enemies at home and abroad. The creative function of the proletarian revolution and its motive force, the working class, is manifest in the creation of a proletarian state.

The founders of Marxism foresaw the protractive nature of the world revolutionary process and the inevitability of many sacrifices. The workers will have to suffer, Marx said, “15, 20 or 50 years of civil wars and international conflict not only to change existing conditions but also to change

<sup>1</sup> K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* (in three volumes), Vol. 3, p. 26.

themselves and to make themselves capable of political control”.<sup>1</sup>

It is true that in the daily revolutionary work, Marx and Engels often expressed in their correspondence an over-optimistic forecast about the proximity of proletarian revolution. How then should we view their specific forecast of dates for the beginning of proletarian revolution in a particular country? Over the most important issue, their forecast of the inevitability of proletarian revolution has been borne out. In 1871, the French workers rose up against the bourgeoisie of France and established a proletarian dictatorship in the form of the Paris Commune. Although it was subsequently to fall, the very fact that it was proclaimed, that it existed, had immense significance for the subsequent revolutionary struggle of the working class. This fact demonstrates the veracity of the Marxist forecasts that proletarian revolution is not something for the dim and distant future. In many instances, however, the specific forecasts of Marx and Engels on dates for the beginning of socialist revolution in various countries have not been borne out. Lenin wrote in this respect: “Yes, Marx and Engels made many and frequent mistakes in determining the proximity of revolution, in their hopes in the victory of revolution. But *such* errors—the errors of the giants of revolutionary thought, who sought to raise, and did raise, the proletariat of the whole world above the level of petty, commonplace and trivial tasks—are a thousand times more noble and magnificent and *historically more valuable and true* than the trite wisdom of official liberalism, which lauds, shouts, appeals and holds forth about the vanity of revolutionary vanities, the futility of the revolutionary struggle and the charms of counter-revolutionary ‘constitutional’ fantasies...”<sup>2</sup>

Those are the most important aspects of the theory of proletarian revolution in which the founders of Marxism provided answers to the vital issues of the workers’ class struggle. The only true criterion of any theoretical truth is practice. And the practice of the workers’ liberation strug-

<sup>1</sup> Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 8, Berlin, 1960, S. 412.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 12, pp. 377-78.



gle has again and again proved that the principles of the theory of socialist revolution discovered by Marx and Engels, like the whole of their theory in general, have been brilliant forecasts of the subsequent course of historical development. They armed the working class with an understanding of its class interests and its historic mission and faith in its mighty emancipating strength.

## 2. Lenin's Contribution

The conditions of the proletariat's class struggle changed radically as capitalism entered the imperialist era. As Lenin pointed out in his writings on imperialism, the contradictions of bourgeois society became more acute as the new epoch commenced. World capitalism was ripe for socialist revolution having reached the stage of far-reaching revolutionary upheaval; it had arrived at the eve of its demise.

The liberation struggle of the working people had intensified manifold. The degree of organisation and political maturity of the proletariat had increased and the peasants and other non-proletarian working people and oppressed nations joined the movement. The threat of proletarian revolution now hung over capitalist society. The working people of individual states, especially those of Russia, led by the proletariat demonstrated in steadily increasing social battles their mighty revolutionary potential to fight and to win.

The considerable shift in the class struggle and the new revolutionary experience posed new questions to revolutionary theory. Moreover, the ideologists of opportunism had taken over the leadership of the Second International after the deaths of Marx and Engels. They distorted and tried to drive out of the minds of the proletarians the fundamental ideas of Marxist revolutionary philosophy in regard to the historic mission of the working class, the socialist revolution and the proletarian dictatorship.

Lenin subjected all the principal ideas of the founders of Marxism in regard to proletarian revolution to a careful analysis, re-established the fundamental ideas that had been distorted by opportunists and developed them further on the basis of recent historical experience. The revolutionary

struggle had advanced many new issues which had to be subjected to theoretical analysis. Lenin provided exhaustive answers to the questions that had arisen. After studying social development and summing up the experience of the international revolutionary movement, he put forward fresh salient ideas for the theory of socialist revolution and formulated the fundamental laws of the workers' class struggle in the imperialist era. All that became an integral part of Marxism known as the *Leninist theory of socialist revolution*. The workers of the world thereby gained a powerful ideological weapon without which they could not have undertaken a victorious liberation struggle under monopoly capitalism.

Being an international philosophy, the Leninist theory could only be born in a country which had been the epicentre of the contradictions of world capitalism and which, because of that and also because it represented the height of revolutionary passion and maturity of revolutionary prerequisites, was becoming the centre of the world liberation movement. Russia became that centre at the turn of the century; the founders of Marxism had, in fact, foreseen Russia's revolutionary future. As Lenin had noted, "Marx and Engels naturally possessed the most fervent faith in a Russian revolution and its great world significance".<sup>1</sup>

Russia had entered the imperialist epoch having bypassed bourgeois revolution and the accompanying destruction of all vestiges of medievalism and serfdom. It had still to resolve these tasks in more advanced conditions of class struggle, in a situation where the balance of class forces was more favourable to the working people and the proletariat was more revolutionary, class-conscious and organised than it was in Western Europe.

The agrarian nature of the tsarist economy and overall backwardness were combined with the existence of a highly developed capitalism. Lenin wrote that Russia had "the most backward system of landownership and the most ignorant peasantry on the one hand, and the most advanced industrial and finance capitalism on the other!"<sup>2</sup> Russia

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 12, p. 376.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 13, p. 442.



was, in fact, ahead even of the United States of America in concentration of industry: while in Russia 54 per cent of all workers were employed at large factories (with a labour force of over 500), only 33 per cent of the American labour force worked at such large factories. The high degree of concentration of industry in Russia was a vital factor in forming the Russian industrial proletariat which essentially differed from workers in small and artisan industries in the degree of its unity, organisation, political maturity and militant revolutionary spirit. The most revolutionary proletariat in the world and the leading detachment of the world liberation movement was formed at the large industrial enterprises of Russia.

The Russian working class was in Russian politics the force which could unite in a formidable revolutionary torrent the various revolutionary movements and lead the masses to momentous social battles. The Russian working class was not alone in its struggle for liberation: it enjoyed mass support from various social forces.

The many-million-strong peasantry became an ally of the industrial workers. The presence of vestiges of feudalism and the absolute power of the big landowners in the countryside brought the mass of peasants to oppose tsarism and move closer to the proletariat. Due to the political flaccidity of the Russian bourgeoisie and its subservience to tsarism, the peasants became increasingly convinced that the industrial proletariat was the only class on which it could rely for complete and unconditional support. They saw in the proletariat a social force which could lead and win the battle to put an end to the existing landowning system and oppression. The proletariat, in turn, realised that it could not guarantee the victory of socialist revolution without a revolutionary alliance with the mass of the peasants. It could not form the political army of revolution needed for victory unless the great idea of a revolutionary alliance between the workers and the peasants materialised.

The working class also found allies for revolutionary struggle in the national liberation movement of the many millions of oppressed nationalities in Russia who consisted mainly of peasants. Tsarist Russia was a prison of nations. The innumerable non-Russian nationalities had no franchise

and suffered humiliation and insults; for them tsarism was both torturer and executioner. They increasingly joined the struggle for national equality. But it was only under proletarian leadership that this struggle could be victorious. The downtrodden nationalities began to realise this with increasing clarity and joined the battle of the revolutionary proletariat. The working class of Russia headed by the Bolshevik Party, united in a single mighty avalanche of liberation struggle all the anti-feudal, democratic and national liberation forces.

The revolutionary movement in Russia had great international significance; the liberation struggle of the Russian working class and peasants was bound to encourage the revolutionary movement all over the world. Russian tsarism had been one of the foremost and strongest components of the imperialist system. Its revolutionary overthrow, therefore, was bound to shake world imperialism to its very foundations. In rising up against tsarism, the Russian workers and peasants cast down a bold challenge to world imperialism and launched their country onto a path of far-reaching revolutionary change.

All this explains the fact that it was Lenin, the leader of the Russian and the international proletariat, who had made an outstanding contribution to the theory of socialist revolution, having illuminated the way for workers everywhere to overthrow capitalism. Even a simple list of the issues of Leninist theory of socialist revolution makes it possible to appreciate the breadth and depth of this theory, its importance and topicality. The following propositions of the theory are among its most fundamental: the maturity of the world capitalist system in the imperialist era for socialist revolution to occur; the increasing unevenness of capitalist development in the imperialist age; the possibility of the proletariat being successful initially in a single or a few countries; a division of the world and formation of two systems; a weak link in the chain of imperialism; bringing the masses to socialist revolution; objective and subjective conditions of socialist revolution; hegemony of the proletariat and the leading role of its militant vanguard—the communist party—in the liberation movement; an alliance of the workers and peasants as the decisive force of socialist



revolution; uniting of the struggle for socialism and the national liberation struggle; the tactics and strategy of the revolutionary proletariat in socialist revolution; the development of the bourgeois-democratic and the national liberation revolutions into socialist revolutions; combining the fight for democracy with the fight for socialism; the decisive role of the proletarian dictatorship in defending the socialist revolutionary gains; the non-capitalist path of development for peoples who had emancipated themselves from colonial oppression.

The notion of the hegemony of the proletariat in all forms of present-day liberation struggle occupies a central position in the Leninist theory of socialist revolution. Marx and Engels had produced the basic ideas for creating this notion—i.e., of the proletariat as the grave-digger of capitalism and the leader of the mass of peasants in socialist revolution. They were unable, however, to develop these ideas into a coherent philosophy of proletarian leadership of the revolutionary struggle.

The class struggle of the proletariat had not accumulated by that time enough experience or factual material for producing such a philosophy. At the time that Marx and Engels lived, proletarian leadership of the various forms of liberation struggle had not yet become a matter of direct practice. Marxists were then convinced that the proletariat would take the lead only in a direct struggle to overthrow the bourgeoisie and establish socialism. In their support for the democratic movements, the founders of Marxism spoke not of the proletariat leading the bourgeois-democratic revolution but only of its active participation in that revolution. Marx wrote that the workers "know that the revolutionary movement of the bourgeoisie against the feudal estates and the absolute monarchy can only accelerate their own revolutionary movement. They know that their own struggle against the bourgeoisie can only dawn with the day when the bourgeoisie is victorious. . . . They can and they must accept the *bourgeois revolution* as a precondition for the *workers' revolution*."<sup>1</sup>

The new circumstances of the class struggle in the impe-

<sup>1</sup> Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 4, S. 352.

rialist era confronted Marxists with the problem of developing the notion of proletarian leadership of all forms of liberation movement, of developing and adapting the Marxist thesis on the historic mission of the working class to the new historical setting. This turned out to be a fundamental task that life itself had presented. The credit for resolving this task must go to Lenin. In his uncompromising struggle with Russian and international opportunists he worked out the principles of proletarian hegemony in the liberation struggle.

Lenin underlined the importance of proletarian hegemony in the revolutionary movement when he wrote that the working class "must be the leader in the struggle of the whole people for a fully democratic revolution, in the struggle of *all* the working and exploited people against the oppressors and exploiters. The proletariat is revolutionary only insofar as it is conscious of and gives effect to this idea of the hegemony of the proletariat."<sup>1</sup>

Today, the principle of proletarian hegemony of the revolutionary movement acquires an even greater importance. As was noted at the International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties in Moscow in 1969, events of recent years bear witness that in the capitalist states the working class "*is the principal driving force of the revolutionary struggle, of the entire anti-imperialist, democratic movement*."<sup>2</sup> At the same meeting L. I. Brezhnev said that "no other class, no other social stratum of society is as organized and strong. The numerical strength of the working class is enormous. Its revolutionary experience is exceptionally rich. Its ideological, cultural and spiritual level has been rising from year to year. The political and moral prestige enjoyed by it in society has grown immeasurably."<sup>3</sup>

It is precisely hegemony in the revolutionary liberation struggle that makes it possible for the working class to win over the majority of the population and to form from it a victorious political army of socialist revolution.

Since the working class cannot prevail over its class

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 17, p. 232.

<sup>2</sup> *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow 1969*, Prague, 1969, p. 24.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 150.



enemies on its own resources, it is destined to lead the revolutionary struggle of all oppressed and exploited people. To achieve that, it must be able to be the political leader of the common people, learn to win over the masses from the bourgeoisie and to achieve the difficult task of rallying around itself and unifying in a united revolutionary front all those classes and sections of the population which can take part (either at all or only at some stages) in the liberation movement.

The notion of the hegemony of the proletariat consists of Lenin's idea of the working class attracting the various class forces to take part in the struggle for socialism at various stages and of leading these forces. It serves as the basis of the strategy and tactics of the proletariat. One could with complete justification call the strategy and tactics a science of how the proletariat implements its hegemony in the liberation struggle.

In several other works, Lenin noted that the struggle for democracy and democratic demands was a necessary preparatory stage for the proletariat to gain hegemony in the socialist revolution. It was in the process of this struggle that proletarian hegemony took shape and grew strong over the wide non-proletarian masses of working people who would come gradually to trust the proletariat, be prepared to act in concert and see it as its defender and leader. In this battle the proletariat gains political awareness and experience of isolating the bourgeoisie from the common people and of leading these common people. It becomes tempered, organised, gains confidence in its own strength and, in a word, prepares itself for taking power and administering society. Lenin wrote that "it is, however, quite inconceivable that the proletariat, as a historical class, will be able to defeat the bourgeoisie, unless it is prepared for that by being educated in the spirit of the most consistent and resolutely revolutionary democracy".<sup>1</sup>

The supreme expression of proletarian hegemony in the liberation struggle is leadership by the proletarian party of all the most militant, active and resolute revolutionary actions of the common people, for "without organisation",

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, pp. 408-09.

Lenin wrote, "the masses lack unity of will".<sup>1</sup> That is why Leninism above all linked the attainment of the goals of the liberation struggle to the preparedness, organisation, unity and theoretical maturity of the communist party and its influence over the widest sections of the working people.

The leading role of the working class and its revolutionary party in the liberation struggle is steadily increasing. In more and more countries, the working class is gaining the hegemony, the attainment of which is today the sure guarantee of consistent implementation of the tasks of fighting for social and national liberation. Experience of the contemporary communist movement suggests that the slightest retreat by communist parties from the principles of the Leninist notion of proletarian hegemony, any renunciation of leadership of the democratic movement is fraught with dangerous consequences for the working people and leads to sectarianism, to Communists becoming divorced from the people and to a weakening of their influence over the people and of their revolutionary positions.

The proletarian hegemony in the liberation struggle does not come of itself, but is won in persistent struggle with the bourgeoisie which, through its extensive agencies, strives to seize control of the revolutionary movements so as to weaken them and manipulate them for its own purposes. Unless the bourgeoisie is removed from leadership of the liberation movement there can be no possibility of consistent and complete implementation of the vital tasks of this movement or of any progress being made.

For the proletariat to gain hegemony it must first and foremost establish a revolutionary alliance with the poorer sections of the peasants, liberate the peasants from bourgeois influence and mobilise all their massive revolutionary potential for the fight for democracy and socialism. The entire history of class struggle in the capitalist era shows that the peasants are the principal ally of the working class. Lenin pointed out that a worker-peasant alliance was the most essential issue "of our entire revolution and of all future socialist revolutions".<sup>2</sup> Revolutionary actions by the

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 240.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 33, p. 155.



proletariat which are not based on a firm alliance with the peasants are bound to end in failure. This is testified to by the first Russian revolution in 1905, the first socialist revolution in Hungary and many other revolutionary events. The victory of socialist revolution in Russia and in several other European and Asian states vividly illustrates the fact that a worker-peasant alliance under proletarian leadership is a necessary condition for successfully fighting for democracy and socialism.

Lenin, of course, never regarded the peasants as the only ally of the working class. The non-proletarian urban workers—the intellectuals, office workers, petty bourgeoisie—are also a social basis for forming the political army of socialist revolution. It is increasingly important for the proletariat to win them over to its side when it tries to attain hegemony in the liberation movement. Today, with the rapid development of science and technology and the consequent changes in the social and class composition of society in advanced capitalist countries, the number of peasants is diminishing while that of intellectuals and service personnel is rapidly increasing. Meanwhile, these social groups and the working class are moving closer together by virtue of their material status, the degree of their exploitation by monopoly capital and the coincidence of their social interests. This coming-together facilitates the proletariat's task of involving in revolutionary struggle these burgeoning social groups. The diminishing share of peasants in the revolutionary movement led by the proletariat is, therefore, fully compensated by the rising share of intellectuals and office workers.

Another vital ingredient in the notion of proletarian hegemony is that of proletarian leadership of the general democratic struggle of oppressed peoples: combining the struggle for socialism with the national liberation movement. Lenin regarded the national liberation movement as a major revolutionary force. The successful development of the world revolutionary process, therefore, greatly depends on the workers' ability to establish an alliance with the movement of oppressed peoples for independence and to direct their revolutionary vigour towards resolving issues of national and social emancipation. In stressing the im-

mense significance of combining the proletarian struggle for socialism with the struggle by oppressed peoples for national liberation, Lenin regarded it expedient to augment the well-known slogan of Marx and Engels on the unity of workers of the world by "Workers of the World and Oppressed Peoples, Unite!".

The idea of proletarian hegemony is a cornerstone of the theory of the bourgeois-democratic revolution developing into socialist revolution which Lenin elaborated drawing on the Marxist notion of permanent revolution. These ideas are integral to the Leninist theory of socialist revolution. The theory of one revolution growing into another comes from the concept of proletarian hegemony as a logical consequence of the objective process of revolutionary movements led by the proletariat. The democratic cannot grow into the socialist revolution without proletarian leadership. Only with consistent and complete proletarian hegemony can a popular revolution continue beyond the democratic stage and become socialist. Proletarian leadership in a democratic revolution provides that decisive force which sustains the process of progressive revolution, its growing into socialist revolution and guarantees the complete and radical implementation of democratic and socialist changes.

Lenin showed beyond doubt that in countries where the liberation struggle is led by the working class, favourable conditions are created for bringing the bourgeois-democratic and socialist revolutions closer together.

Leninism regards the bourgeois-democratic revolution not as an end in itself, but as a stage along the road to socialist revolution. It confronts the revolutionary proletariat with the task of doing everything possible so that revolution continues beyond the democratic stage. In Lenin's view, the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasants was necessary both for implementing bourgeois-democratic changes and for clearing the way for socialist revolution and for facilitating direct struggle for socialism.

One aspect of the theory of the bourgeois-democratic revolution growing into socialist revolution is the notion that the revolutionary forces should regroup around the proletariat at the end of the bourgeois revolution, by the time the revolution reaches the socialist stage.



What does such a regrouping entail? We may illustrate this by reference to the Russian Revolution. During the bourgeois-democratic revolution in February 1917, the proletariat, in its fight against the autocracy and the landowners, headed a broad coalition of democratic forces that embraced the peasants and the urban petty bourgeoisie. When it was time to implement socialist tasks, the working class had to regroup the revolutionary forces and create a political army of revolution that differed in class composition. During the transition from the bourgeois-democratic to the socialist revolution, the social sections of the peasants became differentiated: the peasant bourgeoisie crossed into the camp of counter-revolution, the middle peasants vacillated, and only the poor peasants and farmhands retained their revolutionary enthusiasm for further battle for socialist objectives under the leadership of the proletariat. The urban sections of the petty bourgeoisie also wavered in their attitude at this time.

Lenin put forward the strategic slogan at the time of urging the proletariat to take power together with the poorer peasants and the semi-proletarian sections of the population, while neutralising the middle peasants. However, since the October Revolution also resolved the tasks of bourgeois-democratic revolution, all the peasants followed the proletariat. During the socialist revolution, the proletariat pursued a policy of separating from the bourgeoisie the middle peasants and petty-bourgeois urban elements and led its political army into battle against the big and middle bourgeoisie, including the rural capitalists—the kulaks.

This regrouping of class forces took a somewhat different tack in several of the people's democracies. The broad democratic class alliances which arose at the democratic stage of revolution often continued to operate at the socialist stage of revolutionary struggle.

What are the requirements that guarantee transition from bourgeois-democratic to socialist revolution? Lenin said that two conditions were necessary: first, the proletariat had to be politically conscious and organised and had to be led by a party capable of leading it to decisive battles for socialism and, second, the semi-proletarian urban and rural elements

had to be closely united around the proletariat. The socialist revolution can only be successful if the workers are able to make all the exploited and particularly the poor peasants their true support and reliable ally. In *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, Lenin wrote that to attempt to raise an artificial wall between the bourgeois-democratic and socialist revolutions, "to separate them by anything else than the degree of preparedness of the proletariat and the degree of its unity with the poor peasants, means to distort Marxism dreadfully, to vulgarise it, to substitute liberalism in its place".<sup>1</sup>

The Leninist theory of the bourgeois-democratic revolution growing into socialist revolution teaches the workers to conquer their enemies little by little, first during the bourgeois-democratic revolution and then during the socialist revolution. Lenin elucidated this idea in his article "Draft Speech on the Agrarian Question in the Duma" in which he said: "Imagine, gentlemen, that I have to remove two heaps of rubbish from my yard. I have only one cart. And no more than one heap can be removed on one cart. What should I do?" In his reply to this question, Lenin said that anyone who really wanted to sweep his yard clean would first remove one heap and then the other. "To begin with, the Russian people have to carry away on their cart all that rubbish that is known as feudal, landed proprietorship, and then come back with the empty cart to a cleaner yard and begin loading the second heap, begin clearing out the rubbish of capitalist exploitation!"<sup>2</sup>

The entire course of the workers' liberation movement has borne out the correctness and vitality of this Leninist theory of the bourgeois-democratic revolution growing into socialist revolution. It lay behind the strategy and tactics of the Bolshevik Party in all three Russian revolutions and was embodied in the revolutionary struggle of the working people in the people's democracies. It teaches Communists in capitalist states correctly to combine the fight for socialism with the fight for democracy, skilfully to lead the popular movement for peace, democratic liberties and radical social reforms.

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 37, p. 300.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 12, pp. 282-83.



The sphere of application of this theory grew manifold as a result of the socialist revolution in Russia. Until then, the bourgeois-democratic revolution could only grow into socialist revolution in countries that had reached a certain level of industrial development; it could therefore not occur in the bulk of colonial and semi-colonial states which were far from being industrial. Matters changed greatly after the proletarian revolution in Russia. National liberation movements became a component part of the battle for reconstructing the world on socialist lines. Lenin said that once the oppressed nations had cast off the yoke of colonial and feudal oppression they could—with the assistance of countries in which the proletariat had come to power—enter the road of socialist development bypassing the capitalist stage. Thus Lenin pointed out that not only the ordinary bourgeois-democratic revolution, but its specific variety—the national liberation revolution—could grow into socialist revolution.

Lenin also developed the important idea that the proletariat could triumph initially in a single country; he formulated this idea during World War I. After the October Revolution, Lenin said: "I know that there are, of course, wiseacres with a high opinion of themselves and even calling themselves socialists, who assert that power should not have been taken until the revolution broke out in all countries. They do not realise that in saying this they are deserting the revolution and going over to the side of the bourgeoisie. To wait until the working classes carry out a revolution on an international scale means that everyone will remain suspended in mid-air. This is senseless."<sup>1</sup>

Lenin demonstrated that during the imperialist period, the fundamental capitalist contradictions—i.e., between labour and capital, between imperialist powers and colonies and between imperialist states themselves—attain maximum acuteness and are bound to result in revolutionary crises. When capitalism enters the imperialist era, therefore, favourable conditions exist for a direct assault on capitalism, conditions which the working class can and must utilise if it is to win the struggle for socialism.

On the basis of his analysis of the contradictions of

monopoly capitalism, Lenin formulated the law of uneven economic and political capitalist development in the imperialist era and showed how important it was to the struggle for socialism. This law operates at all stages of capitalist development and not merely in the imperialist era. Lenin wrote: "The development of capitalism proceeds extremely unevenly in different countries. It cannot be otherwise under commodity production."<sup>1</sup> In the imperialist era, uneven capitalist development greatly increases and results in some countries leaping ahead of others; it therefore becomes qualitatively different, a mighty factor in hastening the end of capitalism. As Lenin put it, capitalism at the imperialist stage "is growing far more rapidly than before; but this growth is... becoming more and more uneven... its unevenness also manifests itself, in particular, in the decay of the countries which are richest in capital (Britain)."<sup>2</sup>

In what way does the growing uneven development of capitalism affect the outcome of the workers' liberation struggle in various countries? One result was that the previously dominant capitalist states now fell behind in their economic development, were caught up and even overtaken by other states. This growing unevenness, on the one hand, engendered a sharp unevenness of political development of capitalist states and a non-simultaneous maturation in them of prerequisites for socialist revolution, and, on the other hand, led to rapid and frequent changes in the balance of power between capitalist states. The new correlation of forces was at odds with the partition of colonies, markets and spheres of influence. The viable capitalist states demanded markets and raw material sources on a scale corresponding to their burgeoning economic strength, and the strongest capitalist powers sought world dominance. The contradictions between imperialist powers intensified to the maximum, frequently resulting in imperialist wars, weakening monopoly capital and preventing it from uniting in the struggle against the liberation movement and enabling the revolutionary workers to pierce the imperialist front at its weakest spot. This together with the international solidarity of the proletariat

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 23, p. 79.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 22, p. 300.

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 372.



created an international situation that encouraged a successful struggle for socialism in certain countries. When asked how a country like Switzerland could defend its right to socialist existence if the proletariat there had gained power yet was surrounded by imperialist states, Lenin wrote in 1916 that great powers, of course, would not hesitate to use their colossal forces to put down a socialist Switzerland "...if, first, the beginnings of a revolution in Switzerland did not generate a class movement of solidarity in neighbouring countries, and, second, if these Great Powers were not tied up in a war of attrition which has practically exhausted the patience of the most patient peoples."<sup>1</sup>

At the same time, growing uneven development intensifies the maturing in some places of internal prerequisites for socialist revolution. As Lenin said, "...the workers' revolution develops unevenly in different countries."<sup>2</sup>

Uneven development in the capitalist world is not only a feature of whole states but of enterprises, trusts, branches of industry, regions and areas within a country. Unevenness of this nature leads to greater class conflict and contradictions between individual groups of exploiting classes in general and of the bourgeoisie in particular, to a debilitation, thereby, of the enemies of the working class within a state, and to a better chance of the proletariat to be successful. It also engenders differences in the degree of maturation of prerequisites for socialist revolution between parts of a country. That is why some parts of a country can become bases of a revolutionary movement while others become hotbeds of counter-revolution or more or less "peaceful" areas. It is very important to bear this in mind when forming a political army for socialist revolution, for its successful leadership by Communists and in planning its campaign.

In justifying his conclusion that socialism could prevail initially in a single country, Lenin showed that due to the non-simultaneous maturation of the prerequisites for socialist revolution, the victory of the proletariat could not occur as a simultaneous act throughout the world. In his "Military Programme of Proletarian Revolution", he wrote, "...social-

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, p. 158.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 28, p. 119.

ism cannot achieve victory simultaneously in *all* countries. It will achieve victory first in one or several countries, while the others will for some time remain bourgeois or pre-bourgeois."<sup>1</sup>

Since the initial victory of socialism is possible only in one or a few countries, the question arises of what sort of conditions are necessary for victory.

At the time that the Leninist theory of socialist revolution came into being, this question was distorted by the opportunist leaders of the Second International, notably by Karl Kautsky, who on many occasions maintained that the socialist revolution had initially to prevail in countries with the most highly developed forces of production, where the proletariat comprised an overwhelming majority of the population. Kautsky was here distorting and falsifying Marxism. Marx had, in fact, foreseen that the revolution might start not in the most advanced capitalist state, not "in the heart" of the capitalist world, but on the periphery, in the "extremities of the bourgeois body". He based this upon the fact that in the most developed countries the bourgeoisie had stronger positions, would put up stronger resistance and would be able to deal more easily with any revolutionary trouble. In 1850, Marx wrote that "violent outbreaks must naturally occur rather in the extremities of the bourgeois body than in its heart, since the possibility of adjustment is greater here than there."<sup>2</sup>

Lenin enriched Marxism on this question. In complete accord with Marx, Lenin felt that the initial victory of the workers in highly developed states might be delayed, inasmuch as the bourgeoisie was stronger there, had at its disposal a powerful state apparatus and was more experienced in the art of deceiving the workers. Moreover, the victory of the proletariat in such states could be hampered by their possession of colonies. He wrote: "Today we see a different combination of international forces. We say that it is easier for the movement to start in the countries that are not among those exploiting countries which have opportunities for easy

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 23, p. 79.

<sup>2</sup> K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* (in three volumes), Vol. 1, p. 289.



plunder and are able to bribe the upper section of their workers."<sup>1</sup>

But while it might be more difficult for the working class in highly developed capitalist states to initiate world socialist revolution, it might be quicker and easier to build socialism because of the high level of the forces of production there and then to move to the higher phase of communism.

Lenin decisively opposed those who maintained that the first break in the imperialist chain might occur in the economically weak, least developed capitalist countries. In answer to Bukharin who had argued this in his book *The Economics of the Transitional Period*, Lenin wrote: "It is not true that one can start with the weak to middling. We could have obtained nothing without a certain level of capitalism."<sup>2</sup>

In analysing the revolutionary potential of different countries, Lenin asserted that the workers would win first in countries that were the weak links in the imperialist chain, countries which by no means had to be those with the highest level of industrial development. As he showed, the initial victory of socialism could occur in countries with a medium level of capitalist development (pre-revolutionary Russia was precisely such a country), and subsequent successful socialist revolutionary changes could occur even in backward countries with support from the victorious socialist state.

The success of a socialist revolution is not merely determined by the level of economic development of a country and the size of the proletariat, but by the acuteness of class contradictions, the balance of class forces, the revolutionary spirit of the working class, the presence of a Marxist-Leninist party capable of organising victory, by the degree of influence of the working class on the non-proletarian mass of the people and by the firmness of the bourgeois positions.

Russia was the weakest link in the chain of world imperialism, the focus of its contradictions in the early part of this century from the viewpoint of all these conditions. Long before the October Revolution, Lenin had indicated to the Russian proletariat its vanguard role in the world liberation movement, the possibility and the need for the chain of world imperialism to be broken initially in Russia.

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, pp. 471-72.

<sup>2</sup> *Lenin Miscellany XI*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1931, p. 397 (in Russian).

An entire historical epoch of transition from capitalism to socialism, of revolutionary downfall of capitalism and growing victories of socialism lies between the first victory of the proletariat in one country and the final demise of capitalism in all countries. Lenin had foreseen that this would be an epoch of historic liberation battles, of world socialist revolution in which a single revolutionary stream would form out of the fight of victorious socialist countries against world capitalism, the fight of the working class to establish its dictatorship and the national liberation and democratic movements. According to Lenin, more and more countries would fall away from the imperialist system in the course of these revolutionary liberation movements and join the socialist system.

The Leninist notion that socialism could prevail initially in a single country is a salient part of the theory of world revolution. It provides a rational picture of world socialist revolution from the viewpoint of consistent socialist internationalism. According to this theory, the liberation movement of individual countries is a component part of the world liberation movement and the victory of the proletariat in individual states is not a narrowly national phenomenon but part of the world socialist revolution.

International solidarity of the proletariat occupies a prominent place in the Leninist theory of socialist revolution. The working class can triumph initially in a single country only under the banner of proletarian internationalism which demands that "... the interests of the proletarian struggle in any one country should be subordinated to the interests of that struggle on a world-wide scale..."<sup>1</sup> Only close collaboration and mutual support among workers of various countries can guarantee success for the liberation struggle and subsequent defence of socialist gains. While taking strict account of the domestic situation in its tactics and strategy the communist party must, therefore, also consider interests of the world revolutionary movement.

Lenin's notion of the possible victory of socialism initially in one country clearly illustrates the creative development of revolutionary theory. The importance of this notion is that

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 148.



it encourages the revolutionary initiative of workers and inspires them to bold and decisive action. Having demonstrated that socialism could triumph in any one country alone, Lenin maintained in the Bolshevik Party an unshakable confidence in the success of socialist revolution in Russia. Lenin's theory lay behind the tactics and strategy of the Great October Socialist Revolution.

He devoted a great deal of attention to the question of bringing the people to socialist revolution and seeking ways of achieving it. Underlining the importance of this issue for the revolution, he wrote: "To be able to seek, find and correctly determine the specific path or the particular turn of events that will lead the masses to the real, decisive and final revolutionary struggle—such is the main objective of communism in Western Europe and in America today."<sup>1</sup>

According to the Leninist theory of socialist revolution, proletarian victory is primarily a result of the domestic development of each country and the extreme intensification there of class contradictions. Lenin held that one could not foresee the combination of circumstances that would incite the workers of a country to revolution. Life itself is incomparably richer than all logical schemes. The historical situation can change abruptly and is changing more rapidly than the most ardent revolutionaries suppose. To prevent an unforeseen upsurge in revolutionary struggle leaving Communists unprepared, to prevent a communist party forfeiting its ability to control events at a sudden change in the class struggle, Lenin advised Communists constantly to prepare themselves and the working class for imminent battles for socialist victory, carefully to study the situation at home and abroad, the balance of class forces and the popular mood. Without that it would be impossible to find the specific national approach of each country to overthrowing the bourgeoisie. In his work *"Left-Wing" Communism—An Infantile Disorder*, Lenin wrote of Britain: "We cannot tell—no one can tell in advance—how soon a real proletarian revolution will flare up there, and *what immediate cause* will most serve to rouse, kindle, and impel into the struggle the very wide masses, who are still dormant. Hence, it is our duty to carry on

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 97.

all our preparatory work in such a way as to be 'well shod on all four feet' (as the late Plekhanov, when he was a Marxist and revolutionary, was fond of saying). It is possible that the breach will be forced, the ice broken, by a parliamentary crisis, or by a crisis arising from colonial and imperialist contradictions, which are hopelessly entangled and are becoming increasingly painful and acute, or perhaps by some third cause, etc. Let us not forget that in the French bourgeois republic, for example, in a situation which, from both the international and the national viewpoints, was a hundred times less revolutionary than it is today, such an 'unexpected' and 'petty' cause as one of the many thousands of fraudulent machinations of the reactionary military caste (the Dreyfus case) was enough to bring the people to the brink of civil war!"<sup>1</sup>

An imperialist-provoked war may be one reason for a revolutionary explosion. Lenin, however, never associated a proletarian victory anywhere merely with imperialist wars. Leninism by no means rejects the possibility of the proletariat being triumphant in peace time when no war exists between states: "The fact that both world wars which were started by the imperialists, ended in socialist revolutions by no means implies that the way to social revolution goes necessarily through world war, especially now that there exists a powerful world system of socialism. Marxists-Leninists have never considered that the way to social revolution lies through wars between states."<sup>2</sup>

Revolution cannot be accelerated, nor made to order, nor pushed on from outside. It is caused by a complex set of objective circumstances which the Marxist party must take into consideration. Lenin took up the cudgels with the Trotskyists who favoured the idea of encouraging revolution from without. Lenin wrote in 1918: "Of course, there are people who believe that revolution can break out in a foreign country to order, by agreement. These people are either mad or they are provocateurs. We have experienced two revolutions during the past twelve years. We know that revolutions can-

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 97-98.

<sup>2</sup> *The Struggle for Peace, Democracy and Socialism*, Moscow, 1961, p. 73.



not be made to order, or by agreement; they break out when tens of millions of people come to the conclusion that it is impossible to live in the old way any longer."<sup>1</sup>

Whoever, like the Trotskyists, ignores that warning can cause tremendous harm to the international communist movement.

It is the common people who make revolution. They are led by revolutionary parties. History does not forgive them if they are too late or too precipitous in choosing the moment for beginning revolution. The correct choice of time is crucial for the triumph of revolution, for to be late or too early will inevitably spell failure. The common people and the revolutionary parties may have to pay a very high price in making the wrong choice.

Communists can only raise the people to socialist revolution when that revolution is ripe, when a revolutionary situation exists and when there are both objective and subjective conditions for a proletarian victory.

For the revolution to be successful, most working people must be aware of the need for revolution and be prepared to follow the Communists in a selfless and heroic battle to overturn bourgeois domination and establish workers' power. Such a revolutionary fervour of the majority of working people is an invariable condition of the revolution's maturity.

Reactionary forces see support among Right- and "Left"-wing opportunists who are sometimes more reliable than frank apologists for the bourgeoisie. A persistent fight on two fronts in the labour movement to bring Marxist-Leninist ideas to fruition is therefore an important earnest of success for the socialist revolution.

Lenin regarded the fight against opportunism as a preparatory school for victory over the bourgeoisie, indicating that parasitical and moribund capitalism could remain in its decaying state for a comparatively long time if the labour movement were not to cure itself of its opportunist malady. Lenin termed opportunists the best defenders of the bourgeoisie, better than the bourgeoisie themselves, showing that without their treacherous role in the labour movement the imperialist bourgeoisie could not hold on to power.

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 480.

He wrote that the fight against opportunists and revisionists in the labour movement would have to have "reached a certain stage. This 'certain' stage will be *different* in different countries and in different circumstances; it can be correctly gauged only by thoughtful, experienced and knowledgeable political leaders of the proletariat in each particular country".<sup>1</sup> Without that, the proletariat cannot gain political power.

Another necessary condition for a successful socialist revolution is to isolate from the bourgeoisie the "middle sections"—i.e., the peasants, the urban petty bourgeoisie, the office workers and the intellectuals.

Proletarian revolution, therefore, will only possess all the necessary conditions for victory when the exploited will refuse to go on living in the old way and when the ruling classes are incapable of running society, stumble into crisis and are in a state of frustration, decay and degradation, when there is a party able to take command of the revolution, when it is followed by the majority of the people, when it has gained the upper hand over Right- and "Left"-wing opportunism and revisionism in the labour movement, and when the "middle sections" have abandoned the bourgeoisie. Lenin wrote that victory is assured when all these conditions are present and when the right moment is chosen for the proletariat to seize power.

### 3. Theory of Socialist Revolution After Lenin

Lenin often referred to the proposition of Marx and Engels that Marxism was not a dogma but a guide to action. Revolutionary theory was provided to study the laws of social development and the experience of class struggle and is therefore bound to develop in step with society and the changing conditions and forms of class struggle. Lenin was the keenest advocate of a creative approach to theory and regarded it necessary to bring it up to date with the shifting historical situation.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 31, p. 52.



The Leninist theory of socialist revolution, as all of Marxism-Leninism, is today being developed in full accord with Lenin's behests by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on the basis of the rich experience of revolutionary change in the USSR and other socialist states and of the contemporary liberation movement. The theory is further enriched by contributions from the fraternal communist and workers' parties, and by the world communist movement as a whole.

Decisions taken by the CPSU congresses, conferences and the plenary meetings of its Central Committee, its leading bodies, vividly illustrate the creative development of the theory. It was developed further in the Programme adopted at the 22nd Congress of the CPSU. The latest developments in the revolutionary struggle were analysed in the documents of the 23rd and 24th CPSU congresses. Along with other communist and workers' parties, the CPSU has been active in formulating major documents for the contemporary international communist movement, such as the Declaration of the Meeting of Representatives of the Communist and Workers' Parties of the Socialist Countries in 1957, the Statement of the Meeting of Representatives of the Communist and Workers' Parties in 1960 and the documents of the International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties in 1969.

These documents sum up and develop the notions of the Leninist theory of socialist revolution on the basis of a Marxist-Leninist analysis of the economic and political situation in the worlds of socialism and capitalism, the correlation of class forces within the capitalist states and throughout the world, and the recent experience of class struggle: they refer to the complete and final victory of socialism, the general laws and specific characteristics of proletarian revolution and socialist change; the major forces of the contemporary world revolutionary process; the world socialist community as the bastion and vanguard of the world-wide revolutionary movement; the further deepening of the general crisis of capitalism and the widening social basis of the contemporary liberation struggle and the great importance of unity of all anti-imperialist forces; the correlation of the struggle for democracy and the struggle for socialism; the unity of national and international tasks of the working class; the defence of socialism as the international duty of Communists and working

people in all countries; the multiplicity of forms of socialist revolution; the use by the working class of parliament in the interests of a successful socialist revolution; the present-day tactics and strategy of the communist parties; the growing of national liberation revolutions into socialist revolutions; the non-capitalist path of development; the link between the fight for peace and the fight for socialism; and the possibility today of excluding wars from social life.

A major contribution to the theory of socialist revolution has been made by the collective efforts of the international communist movement on the Leninist proposition concerning the general laws and characteristics of socialist revolution. Socialist revolutions in different countries naturally have both their own peculiarities and general principal laws; the conditions of class struggle in various capitalist states have much basically in common, yet a great deal exists that is specific and unique to that particular country. While the common conditions engender major laws of socialist revolution with a universal character, the specific characteristics give rise to a variety of forms, order and rates of proletarian revolution and socialist change.

The common features of the transition of individual countries from capitalism to socialism are engendered by a certain social homogeneity of the countries undertaking this transition, similar class structure and similar conditions of proletarian emancipation; this applies equally to the nature of the basic contradictions (between social production and the private capitalist form of appropriation, between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie), which have to be resolved by socialist revolution.

The common features of revolution and socialist construction that apply to all countries making the transition from capitalism to socialism have been clearly defined by the CPSU and the fraternal parties in the socialist states. These general features were formulated in the Declaration of the Meeting of Representatives of the Communist and Workers' Parties of the Socialist Countries in 1957 as follows: "...Guidance of the working masses by the working class, the core of which is the Marxist-Leninist party, in effecting a proletarian revolution in one form or another and establishing one form or another of the dictatorship of the proletariat;



the alliance of the working class and the bulk of the peasantry and other sections of the working people; the abolition of capitalist ownership and the establishment of public ownership of the basic means of production; gradual socialist reconstruction of agriculture; planned development of the national economy aimed at building socialism and communism, at raising the standard of living of the working people; the carrying out of the socialist revolution in the sphere of ideology and culture and the creation of a numerous intelligentsia devoted to the working class, the working people and the cause of socialism; the abolition of national oppression and the establishment of equality and fraternal friendship among peoples; defence of the achievements of socialism against attacks by external and internal enemies; solidarity of the working class of the country concerned with the working class of other countries, that is, proletarian internationalism.<sup>1</sup>

The experience of all who have had a socialist revolution has shown that the forms of dismantling the bourgeois state and replacing it by a socialist state can differ, as can the rate of this process. The working class cannot carry through socialist changes and safeguard the gains of socialist revolution from internal and external enemies without creating their proletarian state, a powerful weapon of proletarian dictatorship.

In advocating a creative application of the general laws, communist and workers' parties caution against attempts to eradicate modifications in the policy and tactics of a revolutionary proletariat, thus ignoring the specific conditions of liberation struggle in different countries. They refer to Lenin who said that Communists must be skilful and correct in applying the principles of Marxism to specific circumstances. Guided by these precepts, they regard as vital the need to seek ways and means of adapting the general principles of proletarian revolution and socialist construction to the unique international and internal conditions in each country.

The general laws manifest themselves differently in each socialist country, depending primarily on the specific conditions of class struggle in that country. This specific nature may be characterised by the following principal features: the

<sup>1</sup> *The Struggle for Peace, Democracy and Socialism*, p. 14.

attained stage of revolutionary change; the economic and political level of development (it cannot be the same because of the uneven economic and political development of capitalist states); the nature of state power (although the essence of the bourgeois state invariably lies in the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, the revolutionary proletariat is keenly interested in the particular form that the bourgeoisie uses to exercise its dictatorship—a republic, a military or police dictatorship, a constitutional monarchy or a fascist despotism, and also in the strength of the military and bureaucratic state apparatus); the class structure and balance of class forces within the country (the economic structure and relative proportion of the various classes and parties, the character of their relationships and their influence on the common people); the historical traditions of the people (primarily revolutionary and parliamentary, the attachment of peasants to private property, the influence of religion among the population and the authority of the Church) and the political experience they have accumulated; the national characteristics of the country (the national and ethnic composition of the population, the nature of national and ethnic relations, the presence of colonial vestiges); the degree of organisation and political maturity of the proletariat, its concentration at large factories and in the major economic centres; the strength and degree of resistance of the bourgeoisie, its ability to manoeuvre and deceive the people, its hold up on them; the international situation (favourable or unfavourable international forces and events in regard to the socialist revolution); the proximity of the country to major strongholds of reaction or to international bases of the liberation movement; the natural conditions of the country (for example, fertility of its land, availability of natural resources, its geographical location).

All these factors are bound to add much that is specific to the process of maturation, the rate and forms of implementation of the socialist revolution and socialist change.

Communist parties regard it as a matter of overriding importance to make the most circumspect study of the specific characteristics of the proletarian revolutionary struggle in their own countries. Otherwise it is impossible to plan the correct strategy and tactics of proletarian revolution and cor-



rectly to guide the class struggle, in so far as each communist party is formed, develops and operates on the national soil of its own country. It can only become the leading national political force and administer the state if it takes the strictest account in its revolutionary activity of the national conditions of class struggle in its country and, in accordance with these conditions, works out ways and means of implementing the general principles of transition to socialism.

Communists equally reject both ignoring specific characteristics and exaggerating their importance. While to ignore them dooms a party to sectarian isolation from the people and a dogmatic divorce from life, an exaggeration of the role of a country's uniqueness inevitably leads to a revisionist renunciation of the general principles of proletarian revolution, national narrow-mindedness, to nationalism, to departure from the principle of the unity of socialist internationalism and socialist patriotism, and to nationalistic deviations. Historical events have shown that success comes to those communist parties which combine an unwavering faith in the general Marxist-Leninist principles of proletarian revolution with an understanding of national characteristics and skilful consideration of them in revolutionary struggle.

The question of extending the social base of the contemporary liberation struggle, a question dealt with in the decisions of the 20th, 23rd and 24th congresses of the CPSU, in the Party Programme, the documents of fraternal parties and the International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties in 1969 has undoubtedly enriched the Leninist theory of socialist revolution.

The 24th Congress of the CPSU demonstrated the presence today of a broad social basis for world-wide socialist revolution. The congress was attended by more than 100 delegations of communist and workers' parties, and national-democratic and socialist parties from 90 countries. History has never known such a representative forum of world revolutionary and progressive forces which illustrated so vividly the mounting militant unity of the various streams of the contemporary revolutionary liberation movement.

One of the paramount tenets of Marxism-Leninism is the thesis that the common people are the real makers of history. Lenin wrote that "the only effective force that compels

change is popular revolutionary energy..."<sup>1</sup>. The activity of communist and workers' parties is imbued with profound faith in the vast revolutionary power of the working class and the huge revolutionary potential of the peasants and all other groups of working people. Communist parties see their main task as awakening the creative energies of the working people, stimulating the fullest and most effective manifestation of popular revolutionary energy, encouraging the widest popular upsurge of the liberation struggle, injecting organisation and purposefulness into this struggle, forming the people into revolutionary armies and guiding them by the shortest path to the great goal of destroying all forms of exploitation and human oppression and implementing the ideals of scientific communism.

Success of the revolutionary struggle primarily depends on the degree of popular participation in it. The question of the social basis for socialist revolution and of the classes and social groups interested in socialist change is therefore bound to have prime significance.

After analysing the correlation of class forces internationally and in the capitalist states, the CPSU and fraternal parties have come to the conclusion that the working class can today conduct a fight for peace, democracy and socialism that involves wider sections of the population than ever before; the social base of the contemporary revolutionary process has grown considerably. In referring to the widening social base one may talk broadly of the social forces of the entire world revolutionary movement and, narrowly, of the social base of socialist revolution in individual states.

The conditions of revolutionary struggle both throughout the world and in individual countries are changing substantially because of the on-going world revolutionary process, the successes of the socialist states, the upsurge in the labour movement in capitalist countries, the disintegration of the imperialist colonial system and the active participation of ex-colonies in the liberation struggle, the identification of the struggle for democracy with that for socialism and the deepening of capitalism's general crisis.

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, p. 213.



More and more previously passive social groups are today joining the active political struggle at a time of a rapid entrenchment of socialism, the scientific and technological revolution, the increasing class struggle in the capitalist states and the strong popular movement and national liberation wars that are unprecedented in scope. The revolutionary movement is drawing more and more workers, many millions of peasants, the urban middle classes, intellectuals and students. The vast changes in the balance of class forces internationally are encouraging a growth in communist influence among the workers and the successful formation of a political army to do battle for socialism.

At the same time, the monopoly bourgeoisie is being isolated and is losing its hold over the people; this cannot but facilitate the impending victory of the workers. As was stated at the International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties in 1969, "the convergence of interests of the working class, farmers, urban middle strata and intellectuals as well as their growing co-operation reduce the social foundations of monopoly power, sharpen its internal contradictions and promote the mobilisation of broad masses of people for the struggle against monopolies and imperialism."<sup>1</sup>

Social and economic inequality is growing. Monopoly oppression is becoming increasingly unbearable for all sections of the population—the working class, the peasants, the intellectuals and the urban petty bourgeoisie. The Party Programme stated that "all the main sections of a nation have a vital interest in abolishing the unlimited power of the monopolies. This makes it possible to unite all the democratic movements opposing the oppression of the finance oligarchy in a mighty *anti-monopoly torrent*."<sup>2</sup>

The mounting antagonism between a small band of monopolists and the rest of the population is further extending the mass base of the liberation struggle. There therefore arise unprecedentedly favourable conditions for the revolutionary proletariat to increase its influence in society, for the tactics of the wide anti-imperialist front to be implemented successfully, for the widest sections of the population to be united

<sup>1</sup> *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow 1969*, pp. 25-26.

<sup>2</sup> *The Road to Communism, Moscow, 1961*, p. 483.

around it and for a political army of fighters for socialism to be formed.

The inference of the CPSU and other communist parties from the widening social base of the contemporary revolutionary struggle has great significance for Marxist-Leninist theory and for communist activity. This proposition is continually being enriched by communist and workers' parties in regard to the contemporary conditions of the class struggle. In taking account of the broader mass base of socialist revolution, the communist parties of a number of capitalist states advocate winning over the majority of the population, not simply the majority of working people.

In order to consolidate the revolutionary forces in their battle against imperialism, it is very important to heal the split in the working class in capitalist states and to form a united labour front. In emphasising the great importance of working-class unity, the above-mentioned International Meeting declared itself "in favour of co-operation with the Socialists and Social-Democrats to establish an advanced democratic regime today and to build a socialist society in the future."<sup>1</sup> This co-operation can only be effective if socialists renounce the policy of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie and fight effectively for peace, democracy and socialism.

This does not mean playing down the leading role of the communist party in proletarian dictatorship. History shows that the communist party and socialist and other parties can co-operate in the fight for socialist revolution and construction, with the Marxist-Leninist parties playing a leading role.

The Leninist notion of different political forms of transition from capitalism to socialism has also been further elaborated in the decisions of the CPSU congresses, Party Programme and in a number of documents of fraternal communist parties.

The vitality of this idea has been confirmed by the experience of the socialist countries. The revolutionary creativity of the working class has produced such political forms of socialist reconstruction of society as the Soviets and the peo-

<sup>1</sup> *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow 1969*, p. 24.



ple's democracies. The Mongolian People's Republic differs substantially from many other, especially European, people's democracies, in so far as it bypassed the capitalist stage of development and completed a transition from feudalism directly to socialism after the victory of the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal revolution.

Another important proposition is that made by the CPSU that the forms of transition of countries to socialism will be increasingly varied in future. This proposition has been adopted by the world communist movement and incorporated in the programme documents of the international meetings of communist and workers' parties. The Cuban revolution bears witness to the veracity of this proposition, inasmuch as it produced a new form of transition to socialism that greatly differed from both the Soviets and the people's democracies. Peoples who have won their political independence and started out on a non-capitalist path of development will also indisputably make a new contribution to the forms of transition to socialism.

The idea of different forms of transition to socialism applies equally to peaceful and non-peaceful ways in which the working class may fight to attain power as well as to combinations of the two. No matter what the form of transition from capitalism to socialism may be, its essence remains that of socialist revolution and the establishment of a proletarian dictatorship.

The collective ideas of the world communist movement have made an important contribution to the Leninist theory of socialist revolution in working out the strategy and tactics for communist and workers' parties that are relevant to the present day.

The Soviet and fraternal communist parties have always devoted prime attention to the science of how the working class can lead the revolutionary struggle and work out a correct strategic policy and tactical forms of class struggle. The importance of strategy and tactics however is immeasurably increasing at the present time. New forces, new sections of the working class, peasants, petty bourgeoisie and intellectuals are being drawn into the revolutionary movement. There are no longer any oppressed peoples who are not conducting a liberation struggle. The sphere of practical appli-

cation of Leninist strategy and tactics is therefore being extended. Revolutionary developments insistently demand better strategy and tactics on the basis of drawing on the experience of revolutionary struggle, the development of strategic and tactical principles to the extent that changes have occurred in the correlation of class forces both internationally and within individual states.

In line with the new requirements of the liberation movement, communist parties have enriched their strategy and tactics with the following important considerations: that it is possible to avert world war, to have peaceful coexistence between countries with different social systems, to combine the fight for democracy with the fight for socialism, to employ tactics of broad anti-monopoly alliances, of a national anti-imperialist front, etc. The communist parties use these propositions today in working out their policy. The contemporary strategy and tactics of the world communist movement are primarily aimed at resolving the tasks of the age, using favourable conditions for fortifying and closely consolidating the three basic revolutionary forces of this day and age—the socialist system, the international working class and the national liberation movement—for new impressive victories in the battle against imperialism and for peace, democracy and socialism.

Being true to Marxism-Leninism, the Communists of the socialist states envisage their fundamental strategic tasks as strengthening the socialist community, improving their economies and, on their basis, making it as easy as possible for the revolutionary proletariat to triumph throughout the world. The communist parties in the capitalist states accredit the central place in their activity to the problem of the international solidarity of all revolutionary forces, the struggle against monopoly domination and imperialism, the creation of a broad anti-monopoly front and uniting on that basis the widest groups in the population, using every possibility for fighting for socialism. The main principles of the strategy and tactics of the fraternal communist parties fighting for national liberation and those who have already gained political independence are as follows: victory of the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal and democratic revolution, the unification of all anti-imperialist forces in a broad national and



democratic front, and a policy of non-capitalist development on the way to socialism.

Marxists-Leninists consider it an invariable condition of strategic and tactical success to strengthen in every way the unity of the international communist movement and its national detachments on the unshakeable foundation of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism.

The 24th Congress of the CPSU demonstrated the party's loyalty to Marxism-Leninism and its consistent internationalism. As L. I. Brezhnev said at the Congress, the Central Committee of the CPSU is accountable not only to its own party but also to all communist parties and the world workers' movement. There can be no doubt that foreign communist parties are completely appreciative of this fact. All the foreign delegations present expressed their approval of the activity of the CPSU, stressed its leading role in the world revolutionary process and gratefully acknowledged its support for the revolutionary liberation movement throughout the world. In spite of the malicious contentions of the Maoists that the CPSU had departed from the principles of proletarian internationalism and Marxism-Leninism, the delegates of the fraternal parties stressed in their speeches that the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was the most consistent champion of Marxist-Leninist philosophy and proletarian internationalism.

## OBJECTIVE PLUS SUBJECTIVE FACTORS OF SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

A major difference between the Marxist-Leninist theory of revolution and any type of non-Marxist conception is that the former regards social revolution as a natural and necessary consequence of the development of class society.

The well-known British historian Arnold Toynbee begins his article devoted to the fiftieth anniversary of the Russian Revolution "Looking Back Fifty Years" with the following characteristic phrase: "Revolutions, like wars, are abnormal disturbances of the course of life."<sup>1</sup> Toynbee does not accept the objective need for socialist revolution in Russia; he sees it merely as a means of overcoming age-old backwardness for a country that had rubbed shoulders with more advanced states of the West. Applying his favourite ploy of historical parallel, he writes, "Lenin's mission has been a continuation of Peter's mission, and the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 was a resumption of the revolution that had been started by Peter at the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries".<sup>2</sup>

This unscientific method of investigation that rejects the law-governed process of social revolution makes it impossible to understand the whole *raison d'être* of revolution, and especially a revolution that heralds a new era in world history; such an unscientific approach divorces revolution from the natural course of human history.

<sup>1</sup> A. J. Toynbee, *The Impact of the Russian Revolution 1917-1967*, London, O.U.P., 1967, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.



As opposed to the bourgeois philosophy of history which sees social revolutions as an aberration of the "normal" path of social development, Marxism regards revolutions as vital turning-points in history. This scientific approach stems primarily from a recognition of the objective cause of social revolution.

The principal reason for revolution lies in the development and intensification of conflict between the productive forces and relations of production, between the requirements for economic and social progress and a society's social, political and legal superstructure, conflicts which are independent of people's will and consciousness. At the same time, revolution takes place and can only resolve its tasks successfully when objective conditions that make it necessary radically to reform society are combined with the activity of people and classes fighting to implement these reforms.

This question of the relationship between the two facets of revolution—objective and subjective—is central to the Marxist-Leninist theory of revolution, particularly the theory of *socialist* revolution. It has to be correctly resolved in order to explain the conditions in which revolution arises, is successful or fails, for the revolutionary party to work out a correct line of action and successfully to guide the revolutionary reconstruction of society.

### 1. Marx and Lenin: Objective and Subjective Conditions for Revolution

The attitude of Marxism-Leninism to the relationship between objective and subjective conditions of revolution is to be found in the very fundamentals of a Marxist understanding of history. According to the materialist view of history, all history is the result of the practical activity of people who, whether they are aware of it or not, create it in the given historical circumstances, not in circumstances of their own choosing. The sum total of these circumstances, irrespective of the will or mind of the subject of historical action, comprises the objective conditions for people's actions. Since this human action is of a conscious nature, it acts as a subjective factor in history. The subjective factor includes the

level of consciousness, conscious actions, organisation, the will and energy of people, classes and parties fighting to resolve certain historical tasks or, conversely, trying to oppose their resolution.

Both objective and subjective conditions are formed historically and are not ready-made. Furthermore, the maturation of the conditions necessary for resolving certain historical tasks does not take place evenly. Thus, objective conditions for revolution mature quicker than do subjective conditions and therefore do not always lead to revolution or, particularly, to its triumph. Lenin wrote that "it would be a mistake to think that the revolutionary classes are invariably strong enough to effect a revolution whenever such a revolution has fully matured by virtue of the conditions of social and economic development. No, human society is not constituted so rationally or so 'conveniently' for progressive elements. A revolution may be ripe, and yet the forces of its creators may prove insufficient to carry it out."<sup>1</sup>

What role do the objective and subjective conditions play in carrying out social changes that have matured? Objective conditions play the main role in so far as they point, first, to the very need for resolving the various historical tasks and, consequently, to directions of people's activity and, second, to the actual opportunities for resolving these tasks. Objective conditions determine ultimately also the development of the subjective factor, since the latter is a reflection of living conditions and the requirements for the development of the various social forces. The subjective factor, however, possesses a relative independence and may be out of step with the objective conditions.

If no objective conditions for revolution exist, no revolutionary efforts can provoke revolution and no revolutionary ardour will change society. If, on the other hand, objective conditions for revolution do exist, its fate wholly (or almost wholly) depends upon the subjective factor which then becomes decisive. Thus, the subjective factor may play a decisive part, although it can only do so when the objective conditions for changing society have matured. Whether it is possible to realise the potential created by objective condi-

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 9, p. 368.



tions depends on the subjective factor; it is of major significance in so far as it accelerates or decelerates historical development.

One must also bear in mind that the results of people's activity—whether it be deliberate or spontaneous—always become part of the objective conditions of further social development. After reading Hegel's *Science of Logic*, Lenin noted that "the thought of the ideal passing into the real is profound: very important for history".<sup>1</sup>

Lenin underlined the importance of this idea in opposing vulgar materialism that reduced the importance of the subjective factor and its role in social development. Vulgar materialism lies behind the opportunist theories of "spontaneity" which present social development as automatic and a fate-ordained process. This is particularly typical of Right-wing opportunism which dooms the party to be in the rear of spontaneous development. Lenin often criticised the passive attitude to revolution of the Mensheviks and Second International leaders. He emphasised that the party's active functioning—both ideological and organisational—comprised an inalienable part of preparation for revolution. When at the time of a new revolutionary upsurge in Russia the reformists justified their passivity and unwillingness to prepare the people for revolution by mundane arguments about it not being clear whether revolution was in the cards or not, Lenin pointed out that party activity was a *determinant* of revolution. He wrote, "whether or not there will be a revolution does *not* depend on us *alone*. But we shall do *our* work, and this work will never be in vain. It will sow the seeds of democracy and proletarian independence deep among the masses, and these seeds will *certainly* sprout and produce either a democratic revolution tomorrow, or a socialist revolution the day after."<sup>2</sup>

Opportunist passivity becomes particularly dangerous at a time when revolution is approaching. The revolution will fail and the proletarian cause will be betrayed if revolutionaries leave things to take their own course and refrain from mobilising all revolutionary forces and workers' organisa-

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 38, p. 114.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 18, p. 384.

tions, if they refrain from preparing and gathering the militant forces of revolution. Such are the practical results of the "spontaneity" theory that lies behind Right-wing opportunism.

"Left"-wing opportunism, on the other hand, usually suffers from a subjective and voluntaristic deficiency by ignoring the importance of objective conditions in social development. Subjectivism ascribes the decisive role in history to the subjective factor, especially revolutionary will and revolutionary violence, irrespective of objective conditions. That is the attitude taken by petty-bourgeois revolutionaries like the anarchists, Blanquists, Bakuninists and the ultra-Left elements in the communist movement. Some of them maintain that the common people are natural rebels who only have to be roused to carry out the boldest changes in line with their aspirations; an energetic revolutionary minority, they aver, can rouse the people.

This attitude leads in practice to adventurism in politics, to attempts to rouse the masses to revolution without regard for the presence of a revolutionary situation, and this dooms revolution to failure. "Left"-wing opportunism tends to make a party sectarian, divorce it from the people, replace popular struggle by the actions of a group of conspirators. This whole conception of revolution is false and saturated with idealism. Social history is not amenable to *any* changes at *any* particular time; it is only amenable to those which are naturally prepared by preceding developments and for which there are objective prerequisites.

Any attempt to separate objective from subjective conditions, to counterpose these two aspects of the historical process inevitably leads either to Right-wing or to "Left"-wing opportunism.

Those hostile to Marxism-Leninism often differentiate between Marx's and Lenin's views of revolution. It is wrong, however, to maintain that Marx emphasised economic evolution while Lenin stressed will or consciousness. Some critics attempt, on this "basis", to liken Lenin to Bakunin, Nechaev and Tkachev. The professional "Marxologist", Nikolaus Lobkowitz, for example, maintains that "the Leninist thesis on the need for an élite of professional revolutionaries was in the Russian tradition that went back to philosophers like



Bakunin and Herzen, who were in their youth close to the Berlin Left-Hegelians".<sup>1</sup>

However, anyone acquainted with the works of Marx and Lenin knows that to depict Marx as an "economic materialist" and Lenin as a "voluntarist" is to falsify their views. Both Marx and Lenin essentially coincide in their attitude towards the vital issue of the relationship between objective and subjective conditions. Whatever differences they had are attributable merely to the different historical conditions in which they lived.

The objective prerequisites for socialist revolution had not yet fully matured at the time of Marx and Engels. This is evident, for example, by the downfall of the Paris Commune due not only to the errors of the Communards and to the proletariat's insufficient preparedness, but to the absence of a number of objective conditions necessary for a successful social revolution. As Lenin pointed out, "French capitalism was still poorly developed and France was at that time mainly a petty-bourgeois country".<sup>2</sup>

When imperialism arrived, the world capitalist system had completely matured for socialist revolution. Lenin showed that imperialism was the eve of socialist revolution and that proletarian revolution would become a practical inevitability in the imperialist era.

In this situation, the role of the subjective factor was enhanced due, first, to the complete maturation of the objective conditions for socialist revolution and, second, to the increasing activity of the bourgeois political and ideological superstructure through which the bourgeoisie tried to prolong its rule as all the conflicts of imperialism intensified. This demanded from the working class an even greater concentration and organisation of forces to oppose the bourgeois state.

In the new historical circumstances, Lenin gave all-round treatment to the part played by the subjective factor in the struggle to bring about socialist revolution. He developed the idea of the proletarian dictatorship, the working-class party,

<sup>1</sup> N. Lobkowitz, *Permanente Revolution von Marx bis Marcuse*, Verlag Georg D. W. Callwey, München, 1969, S. 20.  
<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 17, p. 141.

its strategy and tactics, and emphasised the importance for the working class and its allies to organise well.

The new circumstances of ideological struggle were another ingredient that turned Lenin's attention to the role of the subjective factor. Marx and Engels had had to fight mainly against adherents to the pre-Marxist forms of socialism and the philosophy of the anarchists and Blanquists who had adopted their idealist views. Only at the end of their lives did a new enemy—reformism and Right-wing opportunism, whose theoretical basis was vulgar economic materialism—appear on the scene.

The situation had altered by the time Lenin had started his work. A fashionable theory was that of spontaneity propagated by the Russian "economists", Mensheviks and the followers of Bernstein and Kautsky whose views began to hold sway in the Second International. And although Lenin initially had to do battle with the subjectivism of the Populists and later with the Socialist-Revolutionaries, anarchists and ultra-Leftists, nonetheless the principal enemies of Bolshevism were the reformists, those proponents of the spontaneity theory who perverted Marxism in a vulgar materialist way. The need to criticise these opponents also required a further elucidation of the place of the subjective factor in history.

In his *Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution*, Lenin reminded the Mensheviks of Marx's reference to the old materialism which was alien to dialectics and which suffered by being too contemplative and was unable to justify in a materialist way the path of and need for world change. Lenin wrote: "Similarly, the new *Iskra* group can give a tolerable description and explanation of the process of struggle taking place before their eyes, but they are altogether incapable of giving a correct slogan for this struggle. Good marchers but poor leaders, they disparage the materialist conception of history by ignoring the active, leading, and guiding part which can and must be played in history by parties that have realised the material prerequisites of a revolution and have placed themselves at the head of the progressive classes."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 9, pp. 43-44.



Lenin is particularly noted for his recognition of the party's leading and directing role in the revolutionary process, his elucidation of the conditions for the success of its reforming activity and the development of historical popular initiative. He has no peer in making a strictly objective analysis of the economic processes of the development of Russia and other countries. At the same time, he was always able to use this analysis for revealing forces in the world capable of transforming it and forging weapons that were necessary for revolutionary practice. He saw the distinction of Marxist theory precisely in combining "complete scientific sobriety in the analysis of the objective state of affairs and the objective course of evolution with the most emphatic recognition of the importance of the revolutionary energy, revolutionary creative genius, and revolutionary initiative of the masses—and also, of course, of individuals, groups, organisations and parties that are able to discover and achieve contact with one or another class".<sup>1</sup>

The strength of the Bolshevik Party lay in this very combination of objective scientific analysis and great fervour and revolutionary initiative in battle. It was thanks to this combination that the Party was able to play such an outstanding part in preparing for and carrying through the Great October Socialist Revolution, achieving a solid victory and thereby changing the whole course of human history.

## 2. Uneven Maturation of Conditions for Revolution

One of the main contentions of contemporary anti-communism is that the October Revolution was not a law-governed phenomenon but some sort of historical incident, the result of a fortuitous set of circumstances. To back up this fallacious thesis, anti-communists frequently assert that revolution did not occur where Marxism had originally supposed. The late head of the American FBI, J. Edgar Hoover, has written that "the very fact that Communists first came to power in Russia . . . disproves Communist theory. According to Marx and Engels, communism would develop first in the highly industrialised countries. Russia was a predomi-

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 13, p. 36.

nantly agricultural country when Communists seized power in 1917. Russia was entirely unprepared for a Communist Revolution. . . . Similarly, with the possible exceptions of Czechoslovakia and East Germany, all the other nations in the Communist bloc also were predominantly agricultural, rather than industrial, when Communists gained control of them." On that basis Hoover maintained that "the Communist bloc nations themselves show conclusively that communism has not developed from a so-called class struggle between the working class and the capitalist class".<sup>1</sup> One cannot deny, of course, that many of these states had been relatively backward industrially. But only Hoover and people like him could deny the existence of a class struggle there between the workers and the capitalists. It is, after all, indisputable that it was precisely in Russia, which opened up an era of socialist revolutions, that the class struggle was noted for its extreme intensity.

Historical development, especially today, does not progress in a straight line; it moves ahead in a zigzag fashion. In Lenin's article, "The Third International and Its Place in History", written in 1919, Lenin remarks that history had presented a contradiction between the backwardness of Russia and its "leap" to a higher form of democracy, to socialist democracy, as a result of which it ended up in the vanguard of historical progress in its social and political structure.

How did it happen, asked Lenin, that the first country to implement proletarian dictatorship was a comparatively backward European state? He replied: "If any Marxist, or any person, indeed, who has a general knowledge of modern science, were asked whether it is likely that the transition of the various capitalist countries to the dictatorship of the proletariat will take place in an identical or harmoniously proportionate way, his answer would undoubtedly be in the negative. There never has been and never could be even, harmonious, or proportionate development in the capitalist world. Each country has developed more strongly first one, then another aspect or feature or group of features of capi-

<sup>1</sup> J. Edgar Hoover, *A Study of Communism*, New York, 1962, pp. 46-47.



talism and of the working-class movement. The process of development has been uneven."<sup>1</sup>

A manifestation of this uneven historical development was the switching of the centre of the world revolutionary movement to Russia at the start of the twentieth century.

The above-mentioned article by Arnold Toynbee contains the assertion, surprising even for a bourgeois historian, that Marx and Engels, being thoroughbred westerners, did not attribute any importance to the revolutionary movement in Russia. Toynbee assures his British readers that Marx "felt a nineteenth century German's contempt for that backward eastern country. Marx expected that England would be the first country to go communist, because England had been the first country to enter on the capitalist phase of an economic and social course of evolution that he believed to be predetermined. If Marx could have lived to see Russia seize the role of being the first country to make the communist revolution, he would certainly have been astonished and would probably have been displeased." Toynbee quite unashamedly ignores the facts when he concludes that the victory of the October Revolution was an emasculation of Marxism: "This first great practical success for Marxism was at the same time a confutation of Marxist theory."<sup>2</sup>

Let us turn to the actual history of Marxism. Neither Marx nor his followers felt that it was possible beforehand to establish for all time in what succession revolution would occur in various countries. Under pre-monopoly capitalism, Marx believed it probable that revolution would prevail initially in the most developed capitalist states—Britain or France where the material conditions for socialism were more mature. Yet Marx did not preclude the possibility of socialist revolution occurring also in Germany which was then comparatively backward, as long as it was supported by a new peasant war.

Given that the objective and subjective conditions for revolution mature unevenly in different places, the rates of progress of the revolutionary movement differ; this has led to the switching of the centre of the world revolutionary

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 308.

<sup>2</sup> A. J. Toynbee, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-10.

movement from one place to another. While in the first half of the last century, the centre was Britain where the Chartist Movement developed, it switched to France in mid-century and then on to Germany. In the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels remarked that Communists directed their main attention towards Germany because it was on the brink of bourgeois revolution and would carry it out in more progressive conditions of European civilisation and with a much more developed proletariat than had existed in Britain in the seventeenth and in France in the eighteenth centuries. They regarded the German bourgeois revolution as the direct prologue to proletarian revolution. Although the German bourgeois revolution turned out, in the mid-nineteenth century, to be only half complete and despite the hopes of Marx and Engels, it did not become the prelude to proletarian revolution, their evaluation of the role of the German proletariat was borne out. At the end of the century, or to be more precise, from the 1870's onward, the proletarian movement became well developed in Germany and was better organised and more mass-based than anywhere else.

Engels in 1874 noted the advantages which at that time the German workers had over those in the rest of Europe: first, they had an interest in theory which had become traditional for German workers; second, they were able to make use of the experience of the British and French working men who had entered the labour movement earlier. This, together with other circumstances that had hampered the labour movement in Britain and France, led to the German workers being "for the moment in the vanguard of the proletarian struggle."<sup>1</sup> Engels did not take it upon himself to forecast how long events would permit them to retain this honourable post. As a true internationalist, however, he emphasised that it gave the German workers no privileges; on the contrary, it imposed upon them great international obligations which could require a high degree of courage, resolution and energy.

Further historical development found the German labour

<sup>1</sup> K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* (in three volumes), Vol. 2, p. 170.



movement, which had with honour stood up to the Anti-Socialist Law, weakened by the malaise of opportunism which affected it forcefully after the deaths of Marx and Engels. The epoch of relatively peaceful capitalist progress laid its imprint upon the workers' movement in the West.

Meanwhile, new revolutionary storms were brewing in Eastern Europe, which Marx and Engels had foreseen. At different periods as the situation altered, they had taken different attitudes as to which country would initiate revolution. In the early 1870's, Marx and Engels expressed the idea that France would be the country and that the initiative would then be seized and implemented by Germany. Later, they allowed for the possibility that the initiative in developing the world revolutionary movement might go to the revolutionary forces in Russia. Marx wrote in 1877 that "this time the revolution begins in the East, hitherto the unbroken bulwark and reserve army of counter-revolution".<sup>1</sup> This revolution directed against tsarism and the vestiges of serfdom was to serve as a signal for proletarian revolution in the West, so thought the founders of Marxism. In their preface to the Russian edition of the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels called Russia, in 1882, the forward detachment of the revolutionary movement in Europe.

The revolutionary movement in Russia, however, was still basically democratic. At the end of the century, however, the working class began to come to the forefront of the Russian revolutionary struggle; in the mid-1870's it had begun to form its independent class organisations. The Russian labour movement had to overcome difficulties which made the twelve-year period of anti-socialist legislation in Germany appear as a comparatively simple test. But the Russian workers became tempered in these difficulties and acquired qualities which they needed to become the vanguard of the international proletariat. It was in Russia that for the first time a party of a new type was formed—the Bolshevik Party—which radically differed from the parties of the Second International.

In 1902, Lenin wrote in his work *What Is to Be Done?*, which became a programme for the party, that history had

<sup>1</sup> K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 374.

presented the Russian proletariat with a task which was the most revolutionary of all immediate tasks of the proletariat no matter what country it belonged to: "The fulfilment of this task, the destruction of the most powerful bulwark, not only of European ... but of Asiatic reaction, would make the Russian proletariat the vanguard of the international revolutionary proletariat."<sup>1</sup> Under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party, the working class of Russia which was exemplified by the highest degree of revolutionary spirit in the world, carried out this task. Having rallied around itself the broad mass of the population, it was able in February 1917 to bring down tsarism, the stronghold of reaction, and, a few months later, to put an end for all time to the rule of capitalism in Russia.

For about a century, the working class, which rose to struggle first in one then in another country, had not been able to attain a decisive victory. This was due, among other things, to the bourgeoisification of the upper echelons of the proletariat in some countries (Britain, for example) and the repression of the labour movement by the ruling classes in others (in France in 1848 and 1871) and this led to a restricted development there of proletarian struggle and, *inter alia*, led to the struggle being taken up by workers of other countries.

In regard to Britain, Lenin noted that the leading capitalist state for several decades had lagged behind in the workers' revolutionary struggle, while France seemed to have exhausted the strength of the proletariat in the two heroic uprisings of 1848 and 1871, which had made a world-wide contribution to the workers' movement. Through these temporary setbacks and successes, the international workers' movement came to a triumphant socialist revolution in Russia.

Although very profound economic contradictions lay behind the revolutionary process, the slowing down of the revolutionary movement in some countries and its acceleration in others depend on several causes which cannot be wholly reduced to the economic level of individual states. Leninism is opposed to mechanistic inclination to make the

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 373.



rate of revolution directly dependent on the degree of economic development.

In the opinion of the Mensheviks, who took a vulgar materialist stance, revolution could occur only in the most advanced capitalist states; they regarded Russia's backwardness as an insuperable barrier for revolution. Opportunists of every shade maintained that if revolution were to occur in Russia, it would inevitably come to grief because the objective conditions had not matured.

The historical experience of the October Revolution refuted these assertions. Under imperialist conditions, when the world capitalist system had matured overall for socialist revolution, the opportunities for the workers to triumph increased also in the less developed capitalist countries. This first became evident with the victory of the October Revolution in Russia. Some "Left"-wing revolutionaries, however, drew the conclusion from this that backwardness was a locomotive of revolution.

Such an assertion is just as alien to Leninism as was the position of the Mensheviks. When Bukharin claimed in his book *The Economics of the Transitional Period* that the world revolutionary process began with the lowest level of economic systems and that the speed of the arrival of revolution was in reverse proportion to the maturity of capitalist relations, Lenin justly objected. He underlined these words in Bukharin's book and wrote in the margin that one should say "not from the highest" in place of "from the lowest" and "not directly proportionate to" in place of "in reverse proportion to".<sup>1</sup>

We may draw two conclusions from these remarks: first there is no definite proportion between the rates of maturation of socialist revolution in different countries and the level of their economic development. The speed with which revolution arrives in any country is not dependent on the level of economic development alone, but primarily on the degree of acuteness of class conflicts; second, if socialist revolutions are delayed in the most advanced capitalist countries, this does not mean that they have to begin initially in the least developed states.

<sup>1</sup> *Lenin Miscellany XI*, p. 398.

Some modern opponents of Leninism look upon it as a doctrine founded on the dialectic of backwardness. The American anti-communist Alfred G. Meyer, for example, ascribes to Lenin the idea that "backwardness is a crucial causal factor of change".<sup>1</sup> Merle Fainsod is of the same opinion in ascribing to Bolsheviks the idea that "industrial backwardness was transformed from obstacle to opportunity".<sup>2</sup>

Such assertions distort the real position of Leninism which by no means considers a country's backwardness as a condition for socialist revolution. For revolution to take place, a mature contradiction must exist between the forces of production developing within capitalism and the outmoded relations of capitalist production. This presupposes a certain degree of development of capitalist relations. Pre-capitalist stages of development do not by themselves engender a socialist movement and socialist revolution; they only bring forth democratic reforms. Furthermore, socialist revolution is feasible only if the working class—the main motive force and leader of revolution—is present and sufficiently strong. Revolution, therefore, cannot take place earlier in the most backward countries where a proletariat has not yet formed.

Let us note in passing that after a successful socialist revolution in one or a number of countries, opportunities emerge for taking a path leading to socialism not only for countries that are developed capitalist states but for relatively undeveloped states where pre-capitalist relations prevail. In states hitherto oppressed by imperialism, a national liberation movement is developing which today plays an important role and is part of the world revolutionary process directed against imperialism. This movement, however, bears a directly democratic and not a socialist character and, as experience shows, may grow into a socialist movement only with the help of the victorious working class of more developed states. Opportunities for non-capitalist development in states that have achieved their national emancipation come, it would seem, not from their economic back-

<sup>1</sup> A. G. Meyer, *Leninism*, Harvard University Press, Cambr., Mass., 1957, p. 259.

<sup>2</sup> M. Fainsod, *How Russia Is Ruled*, Harvard University Press, Cambr., Mass., 1953, p. 38.



wardness by itself but from the existence in the world of socialist states that are exerting an increasingly strong influence on world development.

In a number of works, including "The Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It", Lenin analysed the economic conditions for the October Revolution in Russia. Russia belonged to the group of medium developed capitalist states and Lenin showed that state-monopoly capitalism was already developing and that this created the objective conditions for moving to socialism.

A strong working class that was to be the most revolutionary in the world was forming in Russia. During half a century of capitalist development, the number of factory workers in Russia had increased 3.9 times and, despite the country's overall economic backwardness, in 1915 over half the workers were concentrated at large factories and mines where they tended to be extremely well organised and revolutionary. Finally, the working class of Russia had many allies, primarily among the semi-proletarian masses of town and country and among the poor peasants oppressed both by capitalism and by landownership.

By the example of the October Revolution the objective prerequisites for socialist revolution, without which revolution is impossible, are clearly discernible.

The objective conditions for revolution include both economic and socio-political circumstances. The former include first and foremost economic maturity and the economic preparedness for socialist change. The maturation of conflict between the forces and relations of production is the economic basis or radical motive for social revolution. Economic development determines primarily the nature of contradictions which social revolution is destined to resolve and, consequently, the nature of the revolutionary process. It makes it possible to carry through the various social changes.

Economic conditions, however, are not the only ingredients in the objective prerequisites of revolution; these prerequisites comprise a much wider range that includes also social and political circumstances, above all the balance of class forces and development of class contradictions. Anyone who identifies the objective prerequisites of revolution

with material conditions runs the risk of being a vulgar economist, which is just as wrong as the idealistic views of "Left"-wing Communists; this approach involves the incorrect conclusion that the maturing of revolution is automatically determined by the degree of a country's economic development. Meanwhile, the revolutionary process depends not only on the economic level of a country but primarily on the intensity of class contradictions which is determined by the economic, political, internal and external situation in which they exist.

The maturing of objective conditions for socialist revolution and for the transition to socialism takes place extremely unevenly. If we compare Russia with the advanced West European capitalist states, we see that there were more material and technological conditions for socialism in the West while the class conditions for the socialist revolution were more mature in Russia where, in addition, the subjective factor had matured to a greater extent.

In analysing the experience of the Great October Socialist Revolution, Lenin stressed that due to a whole number of objective and subjective conditions, "it was easier for the Russians than for the advanced countries to begin the great proletarian revolution".<sup>1</sup> The political backwardness of the monarchy in Russia that was unusual for twentieth-century Europe also contributed to the great strength of popular revolutionary spirit, even more so because the proletarian revolution directed against the bourgeoisie linked up with a peasant war against the landowners. The Revolution of 1905 acted as a dress rehearsal for that of 1917 and provided the revolutionary masses of Russia with useful experience. The worker-peasant alliance and the workers' influence on the semi-proletarian sections of the peasantry facilitated the transition from a bourgeois-democratic to a socialist revolution. Another factor of import was the fact that Soviets were set up on revolutionary popular initiative and became a new form of revolutionary organisation and the basis of political power. Lenin noted, finally, also the importance of such factors as the relative weakness of the Russian bourgeoisie and its lack of substantial experience of running a state, by comparison,

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 310.



say, with the bourgeoisie of Britain and France. Other factors included the favourable geographical situation of Russia which enabled it to hold off longer than any other country could have done the armed assault from more advanced capitalist states.

That was why, as Lenin used to say, it was easier to *begin* a revolution in Russia than in the West, but due to the lower maturity of the material and technological conditions for socialism, it was more difficult to *continue it* and bring it to successful fruition in organising socialist society. This difficulty was primarily due to the fact that the material and technological prerequisites for socialism were less mature than in the highly developed states of capitalism.

Lenin therefore acted as a true dialectical materialist in regard to the effect of the country's backwardness on the development of revolution. He often underlined the serious danger inherent in the country's backwardness with its threat of petty-bourgeois influences and its difficulties in building socialism. The more backward a country is, the more transitional stages and forms it has to pass through on its way to socialism. Any attempt to make a great leap across all these difficulties can lead easily to petty-bourgeois adventurism. Lenin wrote that "a backward country can easily begin because its adversary has become rotten, because its bourgeoisie is not organised, but for it to continue demands of that country a hundred thousand times more circumspection, caution and endurance".<sup>1</sup> The Communist Party of the Soviet Union has heeded these warnings and patiently and persistently laid the foundation of socialism, strengthening the leading role of the working class and overcoming petty-bourgeois influences. All this has brought the country along the broad path of socialist progress and enabled it to overcome its erstwhile technological and economic backwardness.

The existence of the first socialist country in the world, the possibility for revolutionaries elsewhere to receive assistance from it and the weakening of world imperialism have been major factors that have enabled workers to seize power in other countries where the level of economic de-

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 291.

velopment was much lower than in pre-revolutionary Russia. As experience shows, after the successful resolution of democratic tasks, the gradual movement of such countries to socialism became quite feasible as the working class improved its position and mutual aid and co-operation were developed with more advanced socialist states. If, on the other hand, these conditions are ignored as a result of nationalistic attitudes and an anti-Leninist policy by the leadership, as in the case of China, and if the leadership does not show the circumspection, caution and endurance which Lenin emphasised, then petty-bourgeois elements will have the upper hand, sweep the country, undermine the position of the working class and create a serious threat to socialism.

History set Russia and most of the other countries that followed it tasks which more developed capitalist states will not have to face when socialist revolution occurs. These tasks have involved overcoming technological and cultural backwardness inherited from the old regime and converting agrarian into industrial states. That socialist revolution should have to deal with such problems was not foreseen by the founders of Marxism and was a result of the dialectical course of world history which, as Lenin noted, follows general laws; yet it is by no means precluded, rather, on the contrary, presumed, that certain periods may display peculiarities in either the form or the sequence of this development.<sup>1</sup>

Neither bourgeois ideologists, nor revisionists, are able to grasp this dialectic of historical development. The former, like Arnold Toynbee, often try to reduce the whole essence of the October Revolution to an attempt to escape from backwardness. They thereby ignore the fact that to overcome backwardness is a problem set by historical circumstances which, if not resolved, will make it impossible to build socialism; but it is a problem which by no means determines the essence of the October Revolution. On the contrary, the socialist essence of the revolution determined those ways and means which were used to overcome the country's backwardness.

By itself the problem of overcoming backwardness was

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 23, p. 477.



nothing new for Russia. It had confronted the country in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries and became particularly acute after the setbacks to tsarism during World War I. Not one of the ruling classes of Russia—neither the landowners, nor the bourgeoisie—could supply an answer. Only the working class could tackle the problem successfully when it had taken over the reins of state. Thus, the peculiarity of Russian history was that the problems of industrialisation and socialist change coincided whereas in most more advanced countries their solution was separated by whole historical epochs. A result of this coincidence was that the industrialisation of Soviet Russia turned out to be socialist industrialisation and had a different social meaning and was implemented by different methods than capitalist industrialisation in the West.

Some modern revisionists regard as a sort of "original sin" of Soviet socialist development that the socialist state should take upon itself the task of industrialising the country. One result of this "sin" was, they believe, an extreme centralisation of economic management, a growth in bureaucracy and, in the final count, a "deformed" socialism. The Austrian ex-Communist, Franz Marek, for example, maintains that the socialist revolution in Russia and the people's democracies contradicted Marx's classical model of revolution which, however, has "had its revenge" by causing "dramatic problems affecting the democratic development of these states".<sup>1</sup> Such revisionists make the point that industrialisation is not a specific goal of socialism and the socialist forces should not have to cope with it. They ignore the fact, however, that if industrialisation had not been tackled, there would be no mighty Soviet Union today, there would have been no victory of democratic forces over fascism and there would be no world socialist community.

All their "sagacity" was long exposed by Lenin in the pedantry of the theoreticians of the Second International and the Russian Mensheviks who saw as a single model only capitalist development and bourgeois democracy in Western Europe. In the face of their contentions that the Russian

<sup>1</sup> See F. Marek, *Philosophie der Weltrevolution. Beitrag zu einer Anthologie der Revolutionstheorien*, Europa-Verlag, Wien, 1966.

proletariat should not even take power, since a backward country could not attain socialism, Lenin revealed to the Russian people with remarkable revolutionary boldness that the situation "offered us the opportunity to create the fundamental requisites of civilisation in a different way from that of the West European countries". He said that the working people of Russia had gained a real chance to begin by gaining political requisites for building socialism in a revolutionary way so that "then, with the aid of the workers' and peasants' government and the Soviet system, proceed to overtake the other nations."<sup>1</sup>

History bore this out precisely. The October Revolution was a good example of how a revolutionary situation could be used for gaining power and consistently transforming the country along socialist lines.

Lenin had said that the honour of commencing the revolution had fallen to the lot of the Russian proletariat. We may now add that the Soviet working class and peasants had the great honour both of beginning the transition from capitalism to socialism and being the first to build a socialist society over one-sixth of the world's land surface. Following the course outlined by Lenin, they were able, under communist leadership, to wield the political power won in 1917 to carry out economic changes and overcome the country's economic backwardness.

The creation of material conditions for socialism is not mandatory and does not occur in all countries before socialist revolution. If a country has objective conditions for a socialist revolution, as happened in Russia, it has the possibility first to gain political power and then to create these conditions using the new political power to overcome more rapidly its economic and cultural backwardness. This idea lay behind Lenin's plan to build socialism by industrialising the entire economy, collectivising the countryside and carrying out a cultural revolution. The Soviet Union put this plan into practice and became a prime model of socialist construction for other countries.

The peculiar set of historical circumstances put the Soviet Union in the vanguard of the world revolution and

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 479.



brought about a situation where, in Lenin's words, "we happened in the course of events to move ahead of the other detachments, while not waiting until they had caught us up and rebelled".<sup>1</sup>

The peoples of the Soviet Union were first to tackle the problem of rebuilding their country on a socialist base. This genuine feat by the Soviet people and its Party had a tremendous effect on the whole course of world history. The fact that at the same time as fascism was entrenching itself in the centre of Europe, socialism was decisively triumphant in the USSR had huge importance for the fate of all humanity because the Soviet Union was able to halt the fascist flood that had drowned most of Europe. A result of World War II was ultimately the radical change in the balance of power between socialism and capitalism throughout the world. Today other countries of the world socialist community are building a new society along with the Soviet Union. As the Central Committee Report to the 24th Party Congress stated, "the formation and strengthening of the world socialist system has been a powerful accelerator of historical progress, which was started by the Great October Revolution."<sup>2</sup>

### 3. Lenin: Revolutionary Situation as an Objective Condition for Revolution

Lenin propounded a notion of revolutionary situation which was an important part of the theory of revolution. A revolutionary situation is an aggregate of social and political conditions without which revolution is impossible. It is necessary not only for a socialist revolution; its necessity is, in fact, a general historical law. The presence of a revolutionary situation on the eve of every social revolution is evident from the experience of all the foremost revolutions of the last four centuries—both bourgeois and socialist (the Dutch, English and French; the bourgeois revolutions

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 138.

<sup>2</sup> 24th Congress of the CPSU, p. 9.

of 1848 and 1849 in France, Germany and Italy; the Paris Commune; the three Russian revolutions; and the revolutions which occurred after the October Revolution of 1917).

This experience has been summed up in the concept of "revolutionary situation". Drawing on the experience of the bourgeois revolutions, in particular those of 1848 and 1849, Marx and Engels carefully studied the typical economic and socio-political features of the pre-revolutionary situations in France and Germany which led to "an outburst of general discontent" in these states.<sup>1</sup>

Somewhat later, in the 1870's and especially the 1880's, Marx and Engels eagerly followed the developing political situation in Europe anticipating the oncoming of a new round of European revolutions. In his letters during the 1880's and early 1890's (written just after the death of Marx) Engels summed up the development of revolutionary situations in several European states, particularly in Germany, Russia and Italy. In these letters we find the term "revolutionary situation".<sup>2</sup>

Lenin, relying on the initial ideas of revolutionary theory formulated by Marx and Engels, summed up the revolutionary experience of the new epoch, and gave comprehensive treatment to the concept of revolutionary situation. He answered the question of when and how transition is made from a "peaceful" state of society to revolution and what objective changes in social development bring about revolution.

By itself, the presence of objective material conditions for revolutionary changes, for example, the maturity of the capitalist system as a whole for socialist revolution, does not automatically bring about conditions for revolution in any country. The roots of revolution lie in the contradictions of the mode of production. But before they can become the direct cause of revolution, economic conditions for revolutionary change must acquire an appropriate political expression and be refracted in relations between classes and in politics. "Revolutions are never born ready-made," Lenin

<sup>1</sup> See Marx, *The Class Struggles in France from 1848 to 1850*; Engels, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany*, etc.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 35, Berlin, 1967, S. 281-283, Bd. 39, Berlin, 1968, S. 229.



wrote, "they do not spring out of Jupiter's head; they do not kindle at once. They are always preceded by a process of unrest, crises, movements, revolts, the *beginnings* of revolution, the latter *not always* developing to the very end (if, for instance, the revolutionary class is not strong enough)."<sup>1</sup>

While developing on the basis of conflict between the forces and relations of production, the revolutionary situation is directly dependent upon the balance of power of classes in conflict, including that in the international arena. It forms and matures in the course of historical development and is caused by a whole complex of internal and external reasons. The moment of emergence, the rate of development and the forms of social movement of the period of the revolutionary situation depend on the degree of acuteness of contradictions, on the state of the government machine, on the force of attack of the revolutionary class and on the scale and depth of the popular movement, on the international situation, etc.

The world imperialist war considerably changed the whole international situation. It began to urge people to revolution both in Russia and throughout Europe. Both theoretically and practically the problem of the revolutionary situation now became alive through the whole course of world history.

Lenin provided a classical definition of a revolutionary situation in his well-known work "The Collapse of the Second International" written in 1915: "To the Marxist it is indisputable that a revolution is impossible without a revolutionary situation; furthermore, it is not every revolutionary situation that leads to revolution. What, generally speaking, are the symptoms of a revolutionary situation? We shall certainly not be mistaken if we indicate the following three major symptoms: (1) when it is impossible for the ruling classes to maintain their rule without any change; when there is a crisis, in one form or another, among the 'upper classes', a crisis in the policy of the ruling class, leading to a fissure through which the discontent and indignation of the oppressed classes burst forth. For a revolution to take place, it is usually insufficient for 'the lower

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 451.

classes not to want' to live in the old way; it is also necessary that 'the upper classes should be unable' to live in the old way; (2) when the suffering and want of the oppressed classes have grown more acute than usual; (3) when, as a consequence of the above causes, there is a considerable increase in the activity of the masses, who uncomplainingly allow themselves to be robbed in 'peace time', but, in turbulent times, are drawn both by all the circumstances of the crisis and by the 'upper classes' themselves into independent historical action.

"Without these objective changes, which are independent of the will, not only of individual groups and parties but even of individual classes, a revolution, as a general rule, is impossible. The totality of all these objective changes is called a revolutionary situation."<sup>1</sup>

Lenin elaborated further on his ideas of a revolutionary situation in the period of preparation for and carrying through the Great October Socialist Revolution and then in the post-revolutionary period, especially in his book "*Left-Wing" Communism—An Infantile Disorder*."

He listed the revolutionary situation among the objective conditions for revolution although it included elements typical of a shift of a subjective nature such as the degree of political awareness of the people (their enhanced activity). This is due to the fact that changes of this kind, while registering in the human mind, are objective, i.e., independent of human will. They cannot be instigated from without or by the desire of any individual groups, parties or even classes, inasmuch as they are attributable to the objective conditions of a revolutionary crisis.

Lenin included in the signs of a revolutionary situation above all the crisis in the policy of the ruling class. The essence of this crisis of the "upper classes", their inability "to live and govern in the old way" is expressed in the ruling class, organized as a state force, being unable to retain its rule and the existing political regime without substantial modifications. This situation results in a loss of political stability, in a lack of confidence and often in a split in the ranks of the upper classes.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 213-14.



The reasons for such a situation arising may be various. The political bankruptcy of the ruling class may be caused and directly hastened and intensified by internal or external crises of an economic or political nature. They may be military or other foreign policy setbacks that vitally affect national interests and cause serious economic and social consequences. They may be economic and financial crises with their social consequences, such as a sharp decline in the workers' living standards, unemployment and poverty. They may be national or social conflicts.

Political events that are not necessarily global can bring the country to the brink of revolution.

In his work "The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination" written in 1916, Lenin wrote that "the socialist revolution may flare up not only through some big strike, street demonstration or hunger riot or a military insurrection or colonial revolt, but also as a result of a political crisis such as the Dreyfus Case or the Zabern incident, or in connection with a referendum on the secession of an oppressed nation, etc."<sup>1</sup> He referred, too, in "Left-Wing" Communism—An Infantile Disorder, written in 1920, to Britain, also pointing out the various possible motives for the beginning of revolutionary events.

"We cannot tell—no one can tell in advance—how soon a real proletarian revolution will flare up there, and *what immediate cause* will most serve to rouse, kindle, and impel into the struggle the very wide masses, who are still dormant. Hence, it is our duty to carry on all our preparatory work in such a way as to be 'well shod on all four feet' (as the late Plekhanov, when he was a Marxist and revolutionary, was fond of saying). It is possible that the breach will be forced, the ice broken, by a parliamentary crisis, or by a crisis arising from colonial and imperialist contradictions, which are hopelessly entangled and are becoming increasingly painful and acute, or perhaps by some third cause, etc. Let us not forget that in the French bourgeois republic, for example, in a situation which, from both the international and the national viewpoints, was a hundred times less revolutionary than it is today, such an 'unexpected'

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 145.

and 'petty' cause as one of the many thousands of fraudulent machinations of the reactionary military caste (the Dreyfus Case) was enough to bring the people to the brink of civil war."<sup>1</sup>

The crisis "of the upper classes" is a crisis of the political superstructure, the appearance in it of "fissures" in which the discontent and aggravation of the oppressed classes force their way to the surface. Every revolutionary situation is noted for the ubiquitous growth in discontent and anger which seizes not only the proletariat but literally all sections of the population and causes an extraordinary intensification of social antagonisms. A revolutionary situation is primarily due to the inability of the ruling classes to resolve the prime economic and political problems because they continue their bankrupt policy, as Lenin put it, "by following the present course and by the means available to the government and the exploiting classes".<sup>2</sup>

The situation that existed in Russia during World War I is extremely instructive. The unpopular tsarist policy that sought salvation from revolution by embroiling itself in an imperialist war suffered complete fiasco. The extreme degree of economic exhaustion, the heavy losses at the front, the devastation and creeping famine, unbearable working conditions and the political disenfranchisement of the people led to a revolutionary situation. The crisis of the autocratic policy went so far that it could not control events either at the top or at the bottom of society and demonstrated an extreme degree of helplessness and confusion. Military defeats shook and disorganised the entire ruling mechanism and the old regime, incited the bulk of the people against it and antagonised the army. Being completely bankrupt, tsarism forfeited the trust and support both of the Russian bourgeoisie, the Constitutional-Democrats and the Octobrists, and the Entente imperialists—its military and political allies and creditors.

In order to maintain the political status quo and retain power, the ruling classes resort to every possible ploy to prevent the revolutionary development of a political crisis.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 31, pp. 97-98.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 19, p. 223.



Hence the sharp political contrasts and great sweep of political vacillations typical of a revolutionary situation. All the measures—from extreme political terror to manifestations of “liberalism”—are aimed at providing a safety valve, quelling discontent, pacifying the masses and paralyzing their will for struggle.

During the first world imperialist war, Lenin noted the presence of a profound economic and political crisis and the onset of a revolutionary situation not for Russia alone but for the European powers; he regarded the revolutionary situation as European. He wrote that “a political crisis exists; no government is sure of the morrow, not one is secure against the danger of financial collapse, loss of territory, expulsion from its country (in the way the Belgian Government was expelled). All governments are sleeping on a volcano...”<sup>1</sup>

This unstable situation frequently forces governments to manoeuvre and sometimes even to appeal to the common people so that it might somehow hold on to power. The crisis of the upper classes, consequently, is not merely a factor debilitating the political power of the ruling classes, but, in several instances, also a factor objectively encouraging popular revolt.

The general atmosphere of a deep-going economic and political crisis leads to an intensification of relations also within the ruling class, to its further debilitation and division. Certain sections of the social and political élite which but recently supported the government now begin to oppose it. The inner conflicts, growth of opposition and confrontations with the government force both the government and opposition, various groups and ruling factions increasingly to seek popular support. They, thereby, objectively increase even more the split in the ruling class and attract more and more people to politics, to participation in the political struggle and they make the situation even more critical and revolutionary.

A revolutionary situation invariably affects state power. It is linked with a marked weakening of the old state regime and produces a deep-going political crisis and bankruptcy

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, pp. 214-15.

of the ruling policy. Not every political crisis or crisis in government policy, however, produces a revolutionary situation. It has to be a profound political crisis which attains national scope and “affects the very foundation of the state system and not just parts of it, which affects the foundation of the edifice and not an outbuilding, not merely one of its storeys”.<sup>1</sup>

Lenin said that the growth of popular activity is spasmodic “...when the suffering and want of the oppressed classes have grown more acute than usual”.<sup>2</sup> This he described as the second sign of a revolutionary situation indissolubly connected with the crisis of the upper classes. It is this worsening need and poverty that creates that turning point in the popular mood, which changes their unwillingness to live in the old way into open protest and open battle. Social and economic factors play a decisive role here. Economic motives and economic interests incite the people to revolutionary struggle; “a revolution can only be made by the masses, actuated by profound economic needs”.<sup>3</sup>

How the signs of a revolutionary situation are changing today is a topic for discussion in contemporary Marxist literature, and several writers have expressed the opinion that in certain advanced countries revolutionary situations may arise without a great increase in the need and poverty of the oppressed masses.

One should bear in mind that in a scientific Marxist understanding, the “worsening of the need and poverty of the oppressed classes” is not identical with the hunger and impoverishment of the people. Only from a vulgar economic viewpoint can poverty and hunger be regarded as the only reasons for a popular revolutionary mood. Back in 1899, Lenin made the point that poverty in capitalist society “grows, not in the physical but in the social sense, i.e., in the sense of the disparity between the increasing level of consumption by the bourgeoisie and consumption by society as a whole, and the level of the living standards of the working people”.<sup>4</sup> At the same time, this does not exclude

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 19, p. 222.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 21, p. 214.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 11, p. 432.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 4, p. 201.



the poverty and starvation of masses of people in countries drawn into the orbit of capitalism and in regions of even advanced capitalist states.

According to UNESCO statistics, 2,000,000,000 people throughout the world permanently suffer from malnutrition. Despite the vast material wealth accumulated in the country, poverty and even starvation of considerable proportions are permanent features of even American capitalist society which is described by its apologists as a welfare state. According to official American statistics, no fewer than 30,000,000 Americans live below poverty line; many writers assert that hunger and poverty exist on a shameful scale in the United States of America.

One must see in a broad social sense the increasing need and destitution of the working people as a sign of a revolutionary situation. Social conflicts associated with scientific and technological change in capitalist society can lead to increasing distress among the common people even when they are not accompanied by an increase and extension of absolute impoverishment. Rationalisation of industry and agriculture under capitalism, for example, always produces new recruits for the army of jobless and the impoverishment of working people.

The various forms of social oppression like political repression and social disenfranchisement, the threat of fascism and national enslavement can engender a revolutionary mood and lead to a worsening situation.

The specific reasons for a revolutionary situation may be various, but behind them all stands a real threat to the vital interests and social aspirations of the people. Lenin once said that "tens of millions of people will not make a revolution to order, but will do so when driven to it by dire need, when their position is an impossible one, when the joint pressure and determination of tens of millions of people break down the old barriers and are actually capable of creating a new way of life".<sup>1</sup>

Discontent and indignation among "the lower classes", however, does not create a revolutionary situation by itself. Only a coincidence of crisis of policy among the upper clas-

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 503.

ses and a sharp downturn in the living conditions of the people and a growth in their discontent—i.e., the involvement in crisis of both the rulers and the ruled, the upper and lower classes, comprise a revolutionary situation. Lenin said on this point, "oppression alone, no matter how great, does not always give rise to a revolutionary situation in a country. In most cases it is not enough for revolution that *the lower classes should not want to live in the old way*. It is also necessary that *the upper classes should be unable to rule and govern in the old way*."<sup>1</sup>

A crisis in the policy of the ruling classes and a worsening in the position of the working classes constitute the source of a sharp spasmodic increase in political activity among the working people—which comprises a third aspect of a revolutionary situation. The revolutionary classes in such periods cast aside their passivity and inertia typical of quiet, stable periods. The universal growth in discontent and anger is expressed in an upsurge in the revolutionary mood of advanced detachments of the working class and in growing rumblings among other sections of the population. Even people who, in a normal peaceful period, are politically inactive and indifferent to politics become involved. A manifest sign of a revolutionary situation, therefore, is a sharp rise in popular political activity.

At such a moment, the people have an increasing desire to overturn the bankrupt political regime. This is manifest in various facts of economic and political affairs, such as increasing outbursts of mass worker protests, wide-ranging political demonstrations, an extensive and stubborn nationwide strike movement, spontaneous peasant demonstrations, a mounting national liberation movement, open demonstrations by nationally oppressed minorities, mutinies in the armed forces, etc. In 1915, Lenin drew on the facts of a growth in popular revolutionary discontent, strikes and demonstrations in Russia, Italy, Great Britain and Germany to conclude that a revolutionary situation existed in Europe.

The crisis in the policy of the exploiting classes and the political activity of the "lower classes" are interconnected. The growing crisis of ruling policy provokes popular activ-

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 19, pp. 221-22.



ity which increases in pace with the deepening crisis. As a result, a socially charged atmosphere is created, a situation which Lenin regarded as the forerunner of revolution. He said: "The most sceptical of the sceptics are beginning to believe in the revolution. General belief in revolution is already the beginning of revolution."<sup>1</sup> This is a real sign of deep-going changes in people's minds.

In other words, a revolutionary situation is a state of social life when the objective worthlessness of the old superstructure becomes obvious to everyone. The compelling demand for social change and appreciation of the march of time permeate the entire social pyramid of class society from the base to the apex. Mounting political indignation among the most varied sections of the population and popular discontent sooner or later spill over into action and are necessary for revolution.

A sign of a revolutionary situation can, of course, manifest itself in a differing degree of acuteness depending upon historical circumstances (on general conditions of the epoch or period, a given international situation or national peculiarity, etc.). While each of these signs has to be present, only their aggregation provides a revolutionary situation.

The present epoch contributes much that is new to the maturation of a revolutionary situation. It is greatly influenced by the overall shift in the international class balance of power in favour of socialism, the growing strength of the socialist community, the weakening of world capitalism, the disintegration of its colonial empires and the upsurge in the national liberation movement. As noted at the 24th Party Congress, capitalist attempts to come to cope with the new situation are not making it any more stable as a social system.

The conditions for a revolutionary situation take shape not only as a result of the increasing contradictions within individual bourgeois countries and the further deepening of the general crisis of the world capitalist system as a whole, but also under the socialist impact on world development and the battle between socialism and capitalism.

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 8, pp. 54-55.

The revolutionary situations in the 1940's that preceded popular democratic revolutions in parts of central and South-Eastern Europe were particularly characteristic. The principal factors encouraging the revolutionary situation in those states included growing popular discontent and distress caused by war and fascist occupation, the defeat and expulsion of the German invaders, a crisis of the social élite of the national bourgeoisie due to their abject inability to safeguard and defend national interests or due to their direct national betrayal and quisling collaboration with the occupational forces, a growth in the authority of socialism as a result of the decisive Soviet contribution to World War II.

The very existence of the world socialist community and the growth in its power objectively militates against capitalism and thereby encourages revolutionary situations. On the other hand, socialism, by force of example of its political, economic and social attainments contributes to the development of the subjective factor for revolution. The appearance of revolutionary situations in individual states, however, is a result primarily of their own internal and external class contradictions.

In the past, revolutionary situations have in many cases been connected with wars that have debilitated the capitalist system. Yet even when the world imperialist war became a fact, Lenin underlined that "nobody in the world has ever linked expectations of a revolutionary situation exclusively with the 'beginning' of a war".<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, there have been examples in history when wars launched by imperialists for predatory purposes have been used by ruling circles to undermine a ripening revolutionary situation and only in the course of events, due to military disasters and increasing contradictions in capitalism, and an extraordinary worsening in popular distress, revolutionary situations have been born of these wars. Nevertheless, the fact that two world wars launched by the imperialists in the first half of the twentieth century have resulted in socialist revolutions does not imply that war is a necessary condition for revolution.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 21, p. 215.



Revolutionary situations have arisen in a number of countries when they were not involved in any wars. A revolutionary situation, for example, matured in Russia during the revolutionary upsurge of 1912-1914. The entry of Russia into the world war, incidentally, postponed its maturation for a time. A revolutionary situation matured without war in the early 1930's in Spain, which then developed into a popular revolution. It was the military intervention of German and Italian fascists drawing on support from international imperialism that enabled the counter-revolutionaries to gain victory. The possibility of a revolutionary situation arising and developing without war is substantiated by the experience of the Cuban revolution which also showed that today both a revolutionary situation and a socialist revolution are not necessarily linked with geographical proximity of the country concerned to other socialist states.

In today's rapidly changing world, the ruling classes of capitalist states are finding it increasingly difficult to save their doomed capitalist regimes. The downfall of the colonial system greatly weakened imperialism and restricted its economic and political opportunities for stifling the revolutionary movement. At the same time, a scientific analysis demands that we must consider also unfavourable political factors which hamper the development of a revolutionary situation. As the world balance of power changes further in favour of socialism and the revolutionary and national liberation struggle increases, imperialism strives to find new ways and means of defending its doomed social system.

The working class and all exploited masses in advanced capitalist states are today opposed by a huge economic and political force—the combined might of the contemporary exploiting state and the tentacular monopolies. The monopolies control the press, radio and television, the cinema and other mass media; they control all sections of the industry known as "mass culture" and this enables them to shape public opinion and carry out an intensive ideological brainwashing of the population.

The monopolies strive might and main to assimilate the trade unions—the most mass organisations of the working class—into the state-monopoly capitalist system, to split the trade unions from within and to subordinate their interests

to monopoly domination. The dominance of large capitalist monopolies in national affairs finds its expression also in the use of anti-democratic dictatorial administrative methods for repressing the people, militarisation, anti-labour legislation, the eroding and corroding of popular democratic liberties, such as the right to strike and collective bargaining, including the instigation of emergency legislation specified for "extraordinary" and "crisis" situations, i.e., primarily when the power of capital is weakened in the event of a revolutionary situation. One must also bear in mind the power of the international class solidarity of the bourgeoisie which always is resuscitated when the domination of its class confrères is under threat.

The post-war military and political "alliances" of capitalist states like NATO and SEATO with explicit imperialist aims represent class alliances of the capitalist ruling classes.

Meanwhile, the growing power of the world socialist system is a serious obstacle to the imperialist policy of "containing communism" (i.e., of the revolutionary and liberation movement) and exporting counter-revolution. The example of Cuba and its socialist revolution which is successfully developing less than a hundred miles from the major bastion of imperialism—the USA, demonstrates the effective force of the international solidarity of the proletariat, the support from fraternal socialist states, above all the Soviet Union, which has helped to fend off the encroachments of imperialism upon peoples who have taken the path of revolution.

The objective changes that comprise a revolutionary situation, which are a prelude to the downfall of the outmoded system, are necessary for social revolution to occur, irrespective of the form it takes—peaceful or non-peaceful, or whether it triumphs at one blow or over a comparatively protracted period. History provides us with sufficient proof of this. Out of the revolutionary situation associated with the first world imperialist war, there grew, for example, the Hungarian proletarian revolution in March 1919, which was achieved comparatively peacefully, yet the revolution then fell under the onslaught of counter-revolution and intervention.

A worsening of class contradictions is a sign of a revolutionary situation at all times. This applies also to instances



when revolution develops relatively peacefully. It would be wrong to imagine that with a peaceful development of revolution its growth could take place in an evolutionary way. There are bound to be moments when resistance from reactionaries will grow and when various crises will mature and the revolution will go ahead riding over these crises.

In order to become a reality, revolution must pass through a certain process of growth. A revolutionary situation represents a period when revolution matures; the path of a revolutionary situation starts from spontaneous protest, individual demonstrations and outbursts on various grounds that are repeated in various places, and ends with a revolutionary crisis on a nation-wide scale. The development of a revolutionary situation is a process of accumulating and condensing the revolutionary energy of the working class and all exploited people which, in certain circumstances, is manifest and spills over into mass revolutionary action. A leap signifies the transition from a revolutionary situation to revolution. Revolutionary energy bursts through, comes out into the open and is apparent in direct popular movement. Lenin said that "a revolution becomes a real revolution only when tens of millions of people rise up with one accord, as one man".<sup>1</sup> A direct popular revolutionary struggle is what basically distinguishes a revolution from a revolutionary situation.

A revolutionary situation is, therefore, the sum total of objective conditions for revolution, but is not yet revolution itself. A revolutionary situation may not result in a revolution, and, as Lenin warned, a revolution, especially a triumphant revolution, does not follow automatically from every revolutionary situation.

Revolutionary situations where the popular revolutionary mood has not ended in revolutionary action have occurred several times, in particular in the 1860's in Germany, in the 1860's and 1880's in Russia, in the 1860's in Austria and in the 1890's in France. Marx and Engels noted the presence of revolutionary situations in Europe between 1860 and 1880. Engels, for example, summed up the situation in Russia in 1881 to 1883 in the following way: "It is a marvellous revolutionary situation which is quite unprecedented."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 510.

<sup>2</sup> Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 35, Berlin, 1967, S. 283.

Later, in a letter to Salo Faerber dated 22 October 1885 Engels wrote that "a so-called peasant emancipation had created a real revolutionary situation" in Russia which intensified even more twenty years later. "Russia," Engels concluded, "is on the eve of its 1789."<sup>1</sup> As Lenin demonstrated, these revolutionary situations both in Russia and elsewhere did not lead to revolution due to the weakness of class-conscious revolutionary elements and to the immaturity of the revolutionary class of workers.

A revolutionary situation depends on objective changes in relations between classes, and a revolution is unthinkable without the subjective conditions, without conscious revolutionary actions by the advanced class. Lenin wrote that "neither the oppression of the lower classes nor a crisis among the upper classes can cause a revolution; they can only cause the decay of a country, unless that country has a revolutionary class capable of transforming the passive state of oppression into an active state of revolt and insurrection."<sup>2</sup>

A revolutionary situation precedes revolution and direct popular revolutionary struggle as a distinct historical period characterised by the absence of direct popular struggle for power. At the start of revolutionary outburst no one knows whether the given revolutionary situation will result in a real revolution or not. Whether the objective potential for revolution is realised depends on the presence both of objective and of subjective changes in society. The unity, interpenetration and interaction of the objective and subjective factors of revolution, expressed in the people moving to a new stage of struggle and direct revolutionary movement is the turning point for the commencement of revolution. It is the border which separates the period of a revolutionary situation and the entire pre-revolutionary epoch from a period of revolution. Only mass revolutionary action by the advanced class turns a state of discontent, anger and protest into open revolt against the old regime—i.e., into revolution.

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., Bd. 86, Berlin, 1967, S. 374.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 19, p. 223.



#### 4. Subjective Factor and Its Role in Revolution

Revolution can only occur and be crowned with success when the objective conditions are combined with a corresponding development of subjective conditions for revolution. Lenin expressed this point in his work "The Collapse of the Second International" where he gives the above-cited classic definition of a revolutionary situation: revolution occurs not out of every revolutionary situation but only out of a situation when "objective changes are accompanied by a subjective change, namely, the ability of the revolutionary class to take revolutionary mass action *strong* enough to break (or dislocate) the old government, which never, not even in a period of crisis 'falls', if it is not toppled over".<sup>1</sup>

Subjective conditions include the following:

- (1) Revolutionary awareness among the working people, their preparedness and resolve to conduct the struggle to the bitter end;
- (2) A high degree of organisation of the working people and their vanguard which enables them to concentrate all forces capable of fighting for a successful revolution and to act in concert rather than be scattered;
- (3) Leadership of the people by a party which is sufficiently experienced and tempered in battle, capable of developing the correct strategy and tactics of struggle and putting them into effect.

Lenin gave comprehensive treatment to the importance of each of these factors. He frequently noted, for example, the role of the moral factor in revolution. During the first Russian Revolution in October 1905, Lenin stressed as a major gain of the revolutionary masses that their "moral preponderance is indubitable—the moral force is already overwhelmingly great; without it, of course, there could be no question of any revolution whatever".<sup>2</sup> On the eve of the revolution in October 1917, Lenin also attentively studied the popular mood and carefully weighed up the degree of the people's preparedness to make a decisive assault on the old sys-

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 214.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 9, p. 368.

tem. He said: "Ideas become a power when they grip the people. And precisely at the present time the Bolsheviks, i.e., the representatives of revolutionary proletarian internationalism, have embodied in their policy the idea that is motivating countless working people all over the world."<sup>1</sup> The spontaneous revolt which occurred during the April, June and July demonstrations became by the autumn of 1917 a conscious, firm and irresistible resolve by the advanced workers to fight to the end, a mood of hatred for capitalists among the widest sections of the working people. That signified that revolution had matured from the viewpoint of the moral factors.

Preparedness for revolution is not only a matter of moral factors. Lenin pointed out that moral superiority is a necessary but not yet a sufficient condition. Moral force has to become a material force capable of breaking the very strong resistance of the ruling classes. That requires corresponding organisation, including military organisation, of revolutionary forces. He wrote: "To achieve victory, the material force of a revolutionary army is needed, besides the moral force of public opinion, the people's welfare, etc."<sup>2</sup> The nature of the organisation of revolutionaries, naturally, depends on the forms and modes of the revolution, on whether it will be armed or peaceful. But a possibility of obviating armed conflicts arises in favourable conditions when the people are organised and well armed and constitute the overwhelming material force.

Lenin was just as certain about the decisive role played by a revolutionary party in organising and leading revolution. Bourgeois critics of Marxism-Leninism sometimes pose the question of what is the subject of revolution—the class or the party—and maintain that Marx made class the subject of revolution while Lenin made it the party. Others aver that Leninism transfers to the party the task which Marx regarded as the mission of the working class. All these contentions are nothing but anti-communist inventions for there was no disagreement between Marx and Lenin on this issue.

The working class is the subject of socialist revolution, i.e.,

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 26, p. 130.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 9, p. 366.



that class force which is the creator of revolution. The concept of the subject of revolution helps to answer the question of who is the bearer of revolutionary change and who is capable, through their position, of implementing revolution. The working class together with its allies, which it leads, fulfills this role in a socialist revolution.

The working class, however, fulfills this role only when a party is present which helps it to become aware of its historical tasks and its historic mission. The party organises the people for struggle to carry out these tasks. There are therefore no grounds for counterposing the party to the working class. Marxists acknowledge that it is impossible to replace the actions of a class by the actions of a party, even less so by its leadership. Such attempts only lead to sectarianism and adventurism. Yet, at the same time, it is impossible to win a socialist revolution without the party and its organisational activity. To renounce this axiom is tantamount to advocating the theory of spontaneous action which is fatal for revolution.

There have often been occasions in history when objective conditions existed for revolution, yet it failed due to lack of leadership from a Marxist party. The lessons of the November 1918 revolution in Germany bear witness to this.

The principal cause of defeat of the revolutionary movement in several European states after World War I was, according to the Comintern, the absence there of mass communist parties capable of leading the people after they had risen up against those responsible for the outbreak of the war. The Fifth Congress of the Comintern, therefore, concluded that in a worsening crisis of capitalism "the subjective factor, namely the stage of the organisation of the proletarian ranks and of their communist vanguards (parties) becomes the most important question of the entire historical epoch".<sup>1</sup>

The value of the subjective factor is not that it creates but that it utilises the revolutionary situation for gaining victory. A political crisis and other ingredients in a revolutionary situation represent primarily the objective conditions for revolution with which the proletarian party has to contend and which it cannot create at will.

<sup>1</sup> *International Press Correspondence. Special Number, Vol. 4, No. 62, 29th August 1924, p. 649.*

Some proponents of "Left"-wing theories suppose that a revolutionary situation can be "manufactured" by resolute actions even by small groups of revolutionaries as, for example, the declaration of guerrilla warfare on a reactionary regime. No matter how brave and selfless guerrilla detachments may be, however, their fate depends on whether they can gain popular support. If they do not, as experience shows, they will be isolated and are bound to fail. Inspired boldness and heroism must be backed up by a sober analysis of the objective situation.

It is a dangerous illusion to believe that boldness and resolution from the revolutionary vanguard is enough to inspire the masses to revolution. The results of the operation of the subjective factor which motivates the people, of course, have some effect and become, like the results of any popular action, objective facts of life. An ingredient in the revolutionary situation is the sharp increase in popular activity among people who will not be further reconciled to the old regime. There is no doubt that the activity of a party plays an immense part in educating the people, in explaining to them how insufferable the old regime is. Nonetheless, the party cannot provoke a sudden growth in popular activity typical of a revolutionary situation; this is created by the entire political crisis.

The well-known American anti-communist, Sidney Hook, maintains that the Russian revolution was accomplished by political decrees irrespective of and even in spite of the "historical determinisms". In his opinion, "the Communists are not the midwives of a social revolution waiting to be born. They are the engineers or professional technicians of revolution at any time and at any place."<sup>1</sup>

To think that is to ignore the objective law of revolution, to replace social revolution, which is a movement among wide sections of working people, by a putsch engineered by a band of conspirators. Lenin often emphasised that revolution could not be made to order because it needs mature objective processes that lead to a change in the class balance

<sup>1</sup> S. Hook, "Historical Determinism and Political Fight in Soviet Communism", in *Political Thought Since World War II. Critical and Interpretative Essays*, New York, 1964, p. 166.



of power. He regarded the spontaneous growth in a popular movement as a sign that revolution was on the way: "It is beyond all doubt that the spontaneity of the movement is proof that it is deeply rooted in the masses, that its roots are firm and that it is inevitable."<sup>1</sup> Through its politically conscious activity, the communist party encourages growth in popular activity and directs the popular movement. This growth, however, is always caused by objective conditions and cannot be provoked by party will alone. The party, therefore, must rely on a spontaneous popular upsurge.

At the same time, Lenin made the point that the very concept of masses is a changeable one, corresponding to shifts in the nature of the struggle. At the outset of a revolutionary struggle one may refer to several thousands of real revolutionary workers as a mass. When a revolution is ripe, the concept of mass changes: several thousands of workers no longer comprise the mass. For a revolution to be successful it needs the majority, and not only the majority of workers, but the majority of the exploited. Lenin concluded that "we must, therefore, win over to our side not only the majority of the working class, but also the majority of the working and exploited rural population".<sup>2</sup>

Lenin's strategy and tactics for preparing the October Revolution are a classic illustration of how a party, relying on the spontaneous popular upsurge and directing it, can organise a decisive action at the right time so as to deal the enemy a crushing blow at his weakest spot. The October Revolution could not have triumphed if it had not had that precision of Lenin's forecast on the decisive moment for action, if it had not had the entire organising activity of the party in preparing the assault on the bourgeois government.

Thus, the spontaneous processes of a mounting revolutionary crisis and deliberate preparation by the party for resolute action combine as the revolution matures. The combination of favourable objective conditions and the corresponding subjective conditions guaranteed victory in October 1917.

The role of subjective conditions is important both in win-

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 31.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 32, p. 477.

ning political power and in resolving all other tasks of the revolution. A socialist revolution includes a political, economic and cultural revolution. All these changes may be regarded as a process of deepening the revolution. A political revolution may be accomplished in a brief period, but economic and cultural reforms involve more profound modifications to the social system and will take longer to implement. As the revolution intensifies, popular involvement in it grows and people take a more active part in changing society, they develop their consciousness, activity and initiative; at the same time, the importance of the communist party's role in leading the people is enhanced. The whole process of development of the Russian Revolution, therefore, from the time of its triumph in October 1917, vividly illustrates the enhanced role of the party, the role of organised popular struggle, and consequently, the subjective factor as a whole.

Some contemporary bourgeois sociologists portray Lenin's recognition of the mounting role of the subjective factor in the contemporary epoch as a justification for subjectivism. This is not true because Lenin regarded the enhanced role of the subjective factor in close connection with the maturation of the objective conditions for revolution. It is "Left"-wing adventurists who ascribe the determining role to the subjective factor and call for a revolution without taking account of whether real conditions for a revolution exist; this results in them ignoring the objective laws of history.

"Left"-wing notions of revolution tend to transfer the source of revolution beyond the bounds of principal class forces of a society. Some proponents search for forces of revolution amidst the outcasts of a society, others seek them beyond the bounds of the major economic and political centres of the capitalist system—i.e., in backward states, in jungles and mountains. Such views inevitably lead to a rejection of the objective law of revolution which is replaced by the energetic actions of small groups of revolutionaries.

Leninism links the enhanced role of the subjective factor with the growing strength and importance of the working class as the grave-digger of capitalism, with its mounting influence over wide sections of the population, with the organisation and involvement in active revolutionary struggle of the working people led by the party, while subjectivists



reduce the subjective factor to the activities of a band of conspirators, a revolutionary minority to which they ascribe the ability to make revolution at any time according to their own wishes.

Lenin frequently had cause to criticise this type of voluntaristic and sectarian view. "The proletarian party would be making a dangerous mistake," he said, "if it based its tactics on subjective desires. . . . To base proletarian tactics on subjective desires means to condemn it to failure."<sup>1</sup>

The overall ripeness of the world capitalist system for socialist revolution today by no means presupposes the presence of a revolutionary situation in any country at any one time. Attempts by "Left"-wing adventurists to rouse the masses to revolution in the absence of a revolutionary situation only doom the revolutionary forces to certain defeat.

Lenin regarded the need for unity of the objective and subjective conditions as the basic law of revolution. In his book *"Left-Wing" Communism—An Infantile Disorder*, he summed up the experience of the October Revolution and all preceding revolutions: "The fundamental law of revolution, which has been confirmed by all revolutions and especially by all three Russian revolutions in the twentieth century, is as follows: for a revolution to take place it is not enough for the exploited and oppressed masses to realise the impossibility of living in the old way, and demand changes; for a revolution to take place it is essential that the exploiters should not be able to live and rule in the old way. It is only when the 'lower classes' do not want to live in the old way and the 'upper classes' cannot carry on in the old way that the revolution can triumph. This truth can be expressed in other words: revolution is impossible without a nation-wide crisis (affecting both the exploited and the exploiters). It follows that, for a revolution to take place, it is essential, first, that a majority of the workers (or at least a majority of the class-conscious, thinking, and politically active workers) should fully realise that revolution is necessary, and that they should be prepared to die for it; second, that the ruling classes should be going through a governmental crisis, which draws even the most backward masses into politics (symptom-

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, p. 237.

atic of any genuine revolution is a rapid, tenfold and even hundredfold increase in the size of the working and oppressed masses—hitherto apathetic—who are capable of waging the political struggle), weakens the government, and makes it possible for the revolutionaries to rapidly overthrow it."<sup>1</sup>

Let us note that Lenin formulated the fundamental law of social revolution as a general historical law. It was borne out by the experience of the first two Russian revolutions that were bourgeois-democratic, and that of the Great October Socialist Revolution which opened up a new epoch, and the revolutions that succeeded it.

The Leninist conception of a fundamental law of revolution is a scientifically precise definition of the sum total of objective and subjective conditions necessary for revolution and its triumph. Victory can only be assured by a sober and sound analysis of all the circumstances necessary for revolution, allied to the art of organising the people and choosing the right moment for taking power.

To achieve this an intense and protracted period of work by the party among the working people in trade unions and other mass workers' organisations, in parliament and local government, in the armed forces and educational institutions, among young people and among peasants is needed. To prepare a revolutionary assault "we must draw the most backward sections of the workers into the struggle, we must devote years and years to persistent, widespread, unflagging propaganda, agitation and organisational work, building up and reinforcing all forms of proletarian unions and organisations."<sup>2</sup>

The working people become politically oriented not only under the influence of agitation and propaganda. Political experience is accumulated daily in the class struggle. Painstaking and persistent work by the party among the people consolidates the party's position among the people, strengthens its ties and influence among them, and mobilises the people for struggle for power. Revolutionary work has immense significance also from the viewpoint of preparing and choosing the right moment for decisive action because it

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 31, pp. 84-85.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 16, p. 301.



ensures the accumulation of collective and mass experience—i.e., it provides sound material for estimating to what degree the revolutionary situation is ripe and whether conditions for decisive battles have set in.

The Leninist view of the fundamental law of revolution is a reliable theoretical weapon in the hands of the working class and the communist parties in their revolutionary struggle. Lenin made it plain that the tactics and strategy of a revolutionary party must be based on a strictly objective account of the correlation of all class forces both at home and abroad and on the experience of revolutionary movements of revolutionary classes. The whole revolutionary experience of transforming social relations proves conclusively that socialist revolution is not a chance phenomenon, it is not a putsch by a band of conspirators, it is a natural result of historical development—the interaction of objective socio-economic and political conditions and subjective factors.

## THE WORKING CLASS AS THE CENTRE OF ALL REVOLUTIONARY FORCES

In studying the question of forming mass forces for socialist revolution, Lenin stressed the prime importance of the labour movement. He took a new look at the leadership of the working class in the revolution during the imperialist epoch and revealed the part it was to play as the motive force of socialist change. Lenin regarded the campaign for unity in the labour movement as vital for the proletariat to attain its historic objectives and to fulfil its historic mission in the new circumstances.

On the basis of an analysis of imperialist contradictions, Lenin came to the conclusion that it was possible and necessary, during the struggle for revolution, to form around the working class a broad front of democratic forces, a front that was to arise on the foundation of a concerted anti-monopoly struggle and was to maintain itself as an active instrument for changing society on socialist lines. This unprecedentedly broad coalition of social forces led by the working class was to become a victorious mass army of the socialist revolution. That was one of the salient conclusions of Leninism which is as topical as ever.

### 1. The Working Class as Leader of Social Revolution and Motive Force for Changing Society on Socialist Lines

On the evidence of pre-monopoly capitalism, Marx and Engels went deeply into the basic laws of the emergence and development of the proletariat and the labour movement.



Lenin raised Marxist ideas concerning the working class and the labour movement to a new level corresponding to the new era, when the problems of the labour movement became central to world social development.

The first question studied by Lenin in examining the historical destiny of the working class and the labour movement was the laws of growth of the proletariat in the new circumstances.

Even in his early works and his controversy with the Populists, Lenin referred to his studies on Russia in revealing that the growth in the working class, the increase in its absolute numerical power and, at the same time, its proportion in society, was a law for all stages of capitalist development. Later, he substantiated this conclusion by citing statistical data from both Russia and other capitalist states. Capitalist order, he wrote "necessarily and inevitably entails the most intense expropriation of the producers, the continuous growth of the proletariat and of its reserve army—and this parallel to the progress of social wealth, the enormous growth of the productive forces, and the socialisation of labour by capitalism".<sup>1</sup>

In continuing the work begun by Marx and Engels, Lenin primarily sought the laws of growth in the new circumstances of the advanced detachment of the proletarian army—the factory workers. The onset of imperialism signified a rapid development of concentration and centralisation of production and the creation of massive industrial enterprises at which thousands and tens of thousands of workers were employed. This brought important qualitative changes to the status of the proletariat and encouraged the development of its class consciousness and its level of organisation. Lenin stressed that "scattered, individual, petty exploitation ties the working people to one locality, divides them, prevents them from becoming conscious of class solidarity, prevents them from uniting once they have understood that oppression is not caused by some particular individual, but by the whole economic system. Large-scale capitalism, on the contrary, inevitably severs all the workers' ties with the old society, with a particular locality and a particular exploiter;

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 297.

it unites them, compels them to think and places them in conditions which enable them to commence an organised struggle."<sup>1</sup>

He maintained that the material conditions of large-scale capitalist production were not simply an objective material prerequisite for the socialist transformation of society, but a vital prerequisite for forming, organising, consolidating, teaching, educating and tempering that decisive force capable of implementing that change: "The proletariat alone is capable of defeating the bourgeoisie, of overthrowing them, being the sole class which capitalism has united and 'schooled'."<sup>2</sup>

While stressing the particularly rapid growth and concentration of industrial workers as a law of monopoly capitalism, Lenin opposed attempts to reduce the concept of the "working class" merely to factory workers. He wrote that the "mission" of capitalism "is fulfilled by the development of capitalism and the socialisation of labour in general, by the creation of a proletariat in general, in relation to which the factory workers play the role only of front-rankers, the vanguard. There is, of course, no doubt that the revolutionary movement of the proletariat depends on the number of these workers, on their concentration, on the degree of their development, etc.; but all this does not give us the slightest right to equate the 'unifying significance' of capitalism with the number of factory workers. To do so, would be to narrow down Marx's idea impossibly."<sup>3</sup>

Under monopoly capitalism, the proletariat grows due to the increase in the number of factory workers and of its other sections—workers in mining, transport, construction, the service trades, etc.

While analysing the composition of the Russian working class, Lenin revealed that alongside the factory workers who constituted its front rank or vanguard, the Russian working class also consisted of agricultural labourers, miners and railwaymen, construction workers, unskilled labourers in industrial centres and such auxiliary workers as lumber-jacks,

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 300.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 28, pp. 371-72.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 316.



navvies and goods loaders and unloaders, cottage-industry workers and also those working for wages in the manufacturing industries not included in "factory industry".<sup>1</sup> A part of these workers lived exclusively by selling their labour power, while another part had not yet lost contact with the land and was a special type of worker retaining an allotment.

Lenin simultaneously drew attention to the possible prospects for the further growth in the working class due to the proletarianisation of those sections of society which were quite distant from the industrial workers. He stressed the abundance under capitalism of social "types intermediate between the proletarian and the semi-proletarian... between the semi-proletarian and the small peasant..."<sup>2</sup> He noted the tendency of intellectuals and employees to become "proletarianised"; part of them were approaching the social and economic status of the working class. He wrote that "in all spheres of people's labour, capitalism increases the number of office and professional workers with particular rapidity and makes a growing demand for intellectuals. The latter occupy a special position among the other classes, attaching themselves partly to the bourgeoisie by their connections, their outlooks, etc., and partly to the wage-workers, as capitalism increasingly deprives the intellectual of his independent position, converts him into a hired worker and threatens to lower his living standard."<sup>3</sup>

Lenin's conclusions on the laws and trends of growth of the working class under monopoly capitalism have been confirmed by the subsequent course of social and economic development. In advanced capitalist countries nowadays, the working class and their families comprise the absolute majority of the population. Understandably, this creates a completely new situation for the class struggle.

The growth in the ranks of the working class over the last fifty years has been, as Lenin foresaw, largely due to the increase in the number of factory workers. In advanced capitalist states, factory workers comprise over half (between 53 and 55 per cent) of the working class, and in the foreseeable

<sup>1</sup> See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 582.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 31, p. 74.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 4, p. 202.

future, they will no doubt remain its largest section. In the newly liberated states, factory workers account for the largest share of increase in the working class.

Meanwhile, the increasingly rapid development of the non-productive sphere of the capitalist economy has caused a high rate of growth of the total number of people engaged there, including trade and office workers whose number continues to grow fairly rapidly.

As far as the agricultural proletariat is concerned, due to the scientific and technological revolution and the overall decrease in the number of workers in agriculture, its numbers have sharply fallen, and it now comprises some 6-7 per cent of the working class in capitalist states. One may expect an even greater decline in future.

Lenin's forecast in regard to the development of the "transitional" (from non-proletarian to proletarian) social types and the inevitable proletarianisation of the intellectuals and white-collar workers has also been completely borne out. This is especially apparent with the engineers, technicians and specialists employed both in the productive and non-productive sectors. These categories of hired labour are less and less being employed in their earlier jobs as supervisors or foremen and increasingly on productive labour alongside industrial workers. The administrative functions of engineering and technical personnel have become, in the age of scientific and technological revolution, largely an integral part of the production process. In other words, the former social privileges of the engineers and technicians are being eroded. In regard to their material status, it is mostly only somewhat better (and sometimes even worse) than that of highly skilled workers. Of course, this does not apply to the highest categories of engineering personnel and company directors who make up part of the capitalist class in terms of their social functions and material status.

The social consequences of the scientific and technological revolution and particularly the growth of the working class were debated at the International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties held in Moscow in 1969. The delegates who referred to this problem noted that the objective tendency today is towards a proletarianisation of an increasing number of intellectuals, especially the scientific and tech-



nological intellectuals. The final Document of the meeting made the point that the social interests of the intellectuals nowadays "intertwine with those of the working class".<sup>1</sup>

Thus, the strengthening of the position of the proletariat in capitalist society is acquiring a new speed, a new scope and is more and more verifying the historical veracity of Lenin's conclusions on the ways of growth of the working class and the extension of its allies under imperialism.

The second problem examined by Lenin in his study of the destiny of the working class and the labour movement was the growth in the revolutionary potential of the proletariat and its enhanced role in social development. He primarily associated this growth in revolutionary potential with an increase in the size of the proletariat and its proportion in society. "The more proletarians there are," he wrote, "the greater is their strength as a revolutionary class, and the nearer and more possible does socialism become."<sup>2</sup> This is even more true today, since a purely numerical growth in the proletarian army is being accompanied by great qualitative changes in its make-up.

One must bear in mind that today's factory workers are directly connected with scientific changes and the advanced methods and forms of production. Scientific requirements have forced the factory owners to take a step which they had resisted long and hard—that is, somewhat to improve the chance of the working class of obtaining a broader education, above all in the technical fields. As a result, the average level of general and professional training of workers is now much higher than it was before the last world war. In a quarter of a century (1940-1967), the share of highly skilled workers grew from 27 to 36.4 per cent in the USA; the share of semi-skilled workers rose from 48 to almost 52 per cent, and the share of lower-skilled workers fell from 25 to approximately 12 per cent.

These shifts in qualifications mean a greater role for the working class in social production, a greater class consciousness and, ultimately, a greater degree of revolutionary poten-

<sup>1</sup> *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow 1969*, p. 25.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 20.

tial. Meanwhile, with the introduction of up-to-date industrial methods in agriculture and the service trades, the influence of the workers as the decisive productive forces of society is extending to those sectors and is embracing the whole capitalist economy.

This increasing revolutionary potential of the working class, however, does not imply that it is merely a result of its numerical and structural change. Lenin showed that the overriding factor is the new correlation of class forces which takes shape when capitalism grows into imperialism, its higher and final stage.

In the imperialist epoch, the proletariat comes to represent the interests of the working people objectively and in actual fact it becomes the centre of all elements in society opposed to big capital. Bearing this in mind, Lenin formulated an important law of the labour movement expressed in the idea that "the strength of the proletariat in any capitalist country is far greater than the proportion it represents of the total population".<sup>1</sup> This conclusion has importance both for revolutionary theory and for the activity of the revolutionary movement. The Russian Mensheviks and the Right-wing social democrats in the West, in their search for proof that the Great October Socialist Revolution was "illegal", propounded the theory that capitalism could only be eliminated when the proletariat numerically predominated. If the revolutionary movement were to follow that counsel, this abstract and metaphysical approach would bar the way to socialism for most people in the world. Conversely, the Leninist approach opened up far-reaching revolutionary prospects for the whole of mankind. The correctness of this idea has again and again been confirmed both by Soviet history and by the subsequent history of the revolutionary movement in general. It was the working class, irrespective of its relative numerical strength, that played the decisive part in bringing socialist revolutions to countries which severed themselves irretrievably from the system of capitalist wage slavery.

The idea that the actual part played by the proletariat is much greater than its proportion in the population brings us

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 30, p. 274.



to another Leninist notion—that concerning the leadership of the proletariat in revolution, whose basis was laid by Marx and Engels. They had substantiated the role of the working class as the natural leader of all working and exploited people in the fight for socialism.

In his study of the nature of the new historical era and new balance of class forces, Lenin asserted that the proletariat could and should be the leader not only in the socialist, but in any popular, including bourgeois-democratic revolution. He demonstrated that the hegemony of the proletariat was both an objective possibility and an objective requirement of social development.

The bourgeoisie, whose reactionary nature sharply increases under imperialism, is unable as a class further to lead the democratic revolution; it is capable merely of betraying and stifling it. The working class, however, being mindful of the fact that the working people need democratic rights and liberties to launch an extensive struggle for their complete emancipation from capitalist tyranny, acts as the most consistent fighter for democracy (including bourgeois democracy in defending it from the encroachments of the reactionary bourgeoisie). Lenin said: "The proletariat stands for the most consistent and most determined bourgeois revolution and the most favourable conditions for capitalist development, thereby most effectively counteracting all half-heartedness, flabbiness, spinelessness and passivity—qualities which the bourgeoisie cannot help displaying."<sup>1</sup> In this cause, the working class is a real leader of any democratic movement and unites under its banner anyone who is effectively able to fight for this objective.

Lenin revealed further the essence of the leading role and hegemony of the proletariat when he pointed out that it entailed an alliance between the working class and the non-proletarian sections of the working people, above all the peasants. Finally, he explained that proletarian leadership in the democratic revolution was the basis and simultaneously the guarantee that it could grow into a socialist revolution. He analysed a number of problems that had arisen with the further development of monopoly capitalism and particularly

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 13, p. 325.

with its growth into state-monopoly capitalism, which completed the preparation of the objective material conditions for socialist revolution, enhanced the role and potential activity of the subjective factor in social progress and primarily of the working class.

The growth in the revolutionary potential of the working class with the development of state-monopoly tendencies is above all manifest in the growing arsenal of means of struggle which the proletariat has at its disposal and in the growing multiplicity of roads that could be taken to bring the people to proletarian revolution.

As state-monopoly relations rapidly increase, the working class has the chance to bring out new battle slogans, democratic slogans directed at restricting the power of the monopolies before socialist revolution by establishing and extending public control over the various economic sectors. Lenin in his work "The Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It" outlined a plan of struggle for the workers under state-monopoly capitalism and formulated certain specific slogans for this struggle (nationalisation of banks and large companies, workers' control of production, etc.), whose implementation could enhance the role and influence of the working class in society and thereby considerably facilitate a socialist revolution.

He also showed that under state-monopoly capitalism, the possibilities for an alliance between the working class and other sections of the workers grew, or, in other words, the possibility of the working class taking a leading part in the struggle for democracy and socialism increased.

The experience of the Great October Socialist Revolution and, subsequently, of the popular democratic and socialist revolutions in several countries of Europe, Asia and Latin America, convincingly confirmed these Leninist ideas concerning the growth of the revolutionary potential of the working class, and proletarian leadership, in the most diverse historical circumstances. The specific application of these Leninist conclusions varied according to whether it was a highly or medium-developed capitalist state, or a country at a low level of social and economic development. The foundation of the proletarian policy, is, however, the same in principle. In all cases it is the leading role or hegemony of



the proletariat that has ensured the triumph of democratic movements and the development of revolution along the path to socialism.

The experience of class struggle in capitalist states is no less convincing in demonstrating the correctness of Lenin's ideas in relation to the enhanced potential for revolutionary struggle of the working class when the capitalist system enters its further crisis, in regard to the direction that extension of these possibilities takes. The Resolution passed at the 24th Party Congress approving the Central Committee Report underlined that "state-monopoly development results in an aggravation of all the contradictions of capitalism, and in a rise of the anti-monopoly struggle. The leading force in this struggle is the working class, which is increasingly becoming a force rallying all the working sections of the population."<sup>1</sup>

The strategy of class struggle today in advanced capitalist states, which is a strategy to limit and eliminate monopoly power, testifies to the correctness of Lenin's conclusions in regard to the enhanced potential of the labour movement. In effect, all the major class battles in the West today occur on the basis of the programme which Lenin first propounded. It entails a constructive policy for carrying out far-reaching democratic changes whose realisation, while not yet signifying socialism, can decisively constrict the economic power of the monopolies and put an end to the power of big business. If the working class takes the lead in carrying out radical political and economic changes, it can guarantee the most propitious conditions for continuing the battle for socialism.

The further growth in the historical role and revolutionary potential of the working class occurs today in a different environment. The main factor is that since the October Revolution and, particularly since the world socialist community was formed, the further advance of the working class and the labour movement has been indissolubly linked with the development of world socialism.

The triumph of the October Revolution and of one of the strongest detachments of the labour movement—the Russian proletariat—essentially changed the balance of power in the

<sup>1</sup> 24th Congress of the CPSU, p. 214.

world and the position of all other detachments of the working class in capitalist states. The entire workers' movement obtained, in the form of the first proletarian state in the world, qualitatively new weapons in its revolutionary activity, it gained a support and material base, a reliable bastion able to withstand the onslaught of any enemy. The consolidation of all revolutionary forces around the first socialist state in the world considerably strengthened the international unity of individual sections of the labour movement and helped to fortify mutual assistance and co-operation among them. The triumph of the October Revolution meant a huge change in the psychology and moods of workers living under capitalism. The myth that the exploited could not get by without exploiters or could not build their lives independently was completely shattered. This activated the class struggle, greatly strengthened the position and enhanced the revolutionary potential of the working class on a world scale.

The considerable shift in the balance of power in the world as a result of the forming and strengthening of the socialist system was greatly reflected in the enhanced position of the anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist forces in every non-socialist country. In its theses on the centenary of Lenin's birth, the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party said that "the emergence of socialism in the world arena enhances the revolutionary opportunities of the proletariat of the capitalist countries and holds out new prospects for the development of the national liberation movement".<sup>1</sup> As world socialism strengthens, the workers in capitalist states can use their hard-won democratic liberties and institutions even more widely in their own interests and in preparing for decisive battles for socialism. No doubt the years to come will bring a further increase in a variety of ways and means which the working class can apply in its fight for socialism and obtain strong support from the socialist world.

The importance is increasingly growing today of the force of example of socialist and communist creativity as a factor in instilling a revolutionary awareness in the working people under capitalism. L. I. Brezhnev has said: "It would be hard to overestimate the impact that has been made on the

<sup>1</sup> *On the Centenary of the Birth of U. I. Lenin*, Moscow, 1970, p. 41.



masses in the rest of the world by the example of the successful development of the new society in a number of countries in different parts of the world, a society without exploitation, without oppression and oppressors, a society administered for the people by the people."<sup>1</sup> Socialism's force of example acts not only as a factor for entrenching and developing socialist awareness among the working people in capitalist states, but as a serious external factor in strengthening their social position in the anti-monopoly fight.

The further strengthening of the might and influence of the working class is directly associated with the energetic creative endeavour of communist parties which have become a major national political force in some countries. Their activity in organising militant protest by workers in defence of their interests, for peace, democracy and socialism, for bolstering the alliance between workers and non-proletarian sections of society is considerably increasing the fighting efficiency and activity of the working class, on the one hand, and its authority among non-Communists and non-proletarians, on the other. The trade unions, women's and young people's organisations, that protect basic workers' interests, are doing a great deal to improve the revolutionary awareness of the working class.

Several important factors, therefore, exist today for enhancing the role and potential of the working class in the fight against capital. Their cumulative effect is opening up fresh prospects for the working class to fulfil its historic mission.

Today, when the world revolutionary process has become truly universal, the question of paths of social progress in Afro-Asian states, whose peoples have taken the path of independent development, has become a matter of great importance. The working class in these states is playing a less important role than in the advanced capitalist states and is in a minority by comparison with the bulk of the population of Asia and Africa. The proletariat of Asia and Africa is scattered among small and tiny plants, plantations and farms. Many African workers lead an essentially nomadic life without a permanent place of employment. It is understand-

<sup>1</sup> L. I. Brezhnev, *Following Lenin's Course*, Moscow, 1972, p. 287.

dable that they do not yet possess much experience of class struggle and that their class consciousness should be at the initial stages of development.

The working class in most Afro-Asian states, while playing an active part in the struggle for liberation from colonialism, could not immediately become the leader of the liberation movement. The national bourgeoisie and the leading forces of the peasants who still comprise the most numerous mass base of the national liberation revolutions played the leading part in this battle in the initial stages.

That does not alter the fact, of course, that the Asian and African proletariat is objectively the most consistent revolutionary force in the anti-imperialist struggle. The future of Asia and Africa largely depends on the working class, on its strength and perseverance in battle, on its ability to organise around itself the many millions of peasants.

The present situation in the world is extremely favourable for the working class to play a more active part in the zones of the national liberation struggle. Indeed, while the proletariat in the West was formed and tempered while capitalism ruled supreme, the working class in the ex-colonies is growing and gaining in strength in a situation of struggle between the two systems and under the powerful impact of world socialism. This has caused relatively rapid rates of development of political consciousness, organisation and fighting efficiency among the workers of Asia and Africa. Further economic growth in the newly liberated states and their industrial development will inevitably increase the numerical strength of the proletariat and, consequently, enhance its role in society.

Nonetheless, the status of the working class in Afro-Asian states today cannot yet enable it to become a full-fledged leader in the struggle for social change. While political and economic developments in the ex-colonies may proceed under the mounting influence of socialist ideas, it is primarily attributable to the fact that the international working class as a whole is successfully leading the world revolutionary process.

The International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties in 1960 noted that the success of national liberation revolutions and general direction of development in the former colonial world were largely due to the influence of world



socialism—the vanguard of the international movement and the support from the workers of advanced capitalist states. This idea was reiterated at the International Meeting in 1969.

The Leninist notion of working-class hegemony in social revolution and the continual extension of the revolutionary potential of the international workers' movement has, therefore, been further developed in both theory and practice.

Disturbed by the growing power of the international working class, imperialist ideologists are making tremendous efforts to prove that its significance in the life of society is declining and that it is actually losing ground. It is interesting to note that they resort to arguments in support of their absurd theories which are similar to those which Lenin had to contend with at the beginning of the century.

The most widespread bourgeois arguments are that the proletariat today has so improved its standard of living and has so satisfied its vital needs that it has lost its revolutionary motivations and become part of the "welfare state"; this evidently proves the fallaciousness of the Marxist-Leninist theory of socialist revolution because Marxism is supposed to have linked the revolutionary militancy of the proletariat to its poverty. Once poverty is ended, then, it is claimed, the inevitability of socialist revolution no longer has any relevance. If we leave aside the ridiculous assertion that poverty no longer exists under contemporary capitalism, we may emphasise the following: the revolutionary role of the proletariat is dependent not only on its material standard of living, but also on its social status in society as a class deprived of the means of production and existing by selling its labour power.

More than 70 years ago, Lenin resolutely fought the Populists who also tried to seek the source for the revolutionary spirit of the proletariat only in its dire material status. In his reply, Lenin wrote: "There are two ways of arriving at the conclusion that the worker must be roused to fight... either by regarding the worker as the sole fighter for the socialist system... or by appealing to him simply as the one who suffers most from the present system, who has nothing more to lose... But that would mean compelling the worker to drag in the wake of the bourgeois radicals, who refuse to see the antagonism between the bourgeoisie

and the proletariat..."<sup>1</sup> Lenin also said that "the position of the factory worker in the general system of capitalist relations makes him the sole fighter for the emancipation of the working class..."<sup>2</sup>

This leads to another question, that of the relationship between the workers' living standard and their revolutionary spirit. A certain improvement in the standard of living of individual sections of workers under capitalism, of course, can sow illusions in regard to capitalism and encourage opportunist attitudes. But this applies only to a comparatively small and the less class-conscious section of the people. Most of the industrial proletariat which has obtained in fierce class struggles a better material status also progresses, as Lenin wrote, "morally, intellectually and politically, become more capable of achieving its great emancipatory aims".<sup>3</sup> The correctness of this idea has been fully borne out by half a century of communist struggle.

Thus, the numerical strength of the working class in the capitalist world continues to grow, as does its revolutionary potential. These Leninist conclusions have a truly invaluable importance since they provide a key for understanding the whole course of history. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that they are the target of constant attacks from the ideological opponents of Marxism and, primarily, from Right-wing revisionists.

Renegades like Roger Garaudy and Ernst Fischer, who are now outside the communist and workers' movement, try to substantiate their course of action. They crudely distort and falsify the ideas of Marx, Engels and Lenin by concealing themselves under the false flag of the defence and development of Marxism. If one looks closely at the views of these revisionists and analyses their arguments, one finds that on a number of important issues they have frankly joined forces with the bourgeois ideologists in their anti-communism and anti-Sovietism. The modern revisionists try to prove that the working class has lost its objective status as a decisive antagonist and fighter against monopoly capi-

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 294.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 299-300.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 18, p. 85.



talism; new social forces and even entire new blocs are said to have replaced it in the new circumstances.

Ernst Fischer frankly denies that the decisive antagonism in capitalist society is the diametrically opposed nature of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat and that other conflicts inherent in capitalism have arisen from this antagonism. In his words, "an analysis of modern society shows that the conflict between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie is no longer the only decisive problem."<sup>1</sup>

He sees the principal contradiction "not in the proletariat and the bourgeoisie", but in "the squandering of forces of production", in the fact that vast sums are being spent on military aims and not on eliminating poverty,<sup>2</sup> although it is clear that these contradictions are a result of the undivided sway of the bourgeoisie and their exploitation of the proletariat. Fischer, however, must at all costs renounce the decisive antagonism between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.

Another renegade, Roger Garaudy, propounds, in his considerations of "a new historical bloc", the theory of "equality" of all social forces in the bloc. He uses this argument to give the appearance of emphasising the important and active position of all classes and social sections, while passing over in silence the leading role among all groups of working people precisely of the working class. In describing this new historical bloc, Garaudy insistently claims that its component parts are independent and eclectically equal. He writes: "This requirement of active participation in determining the ends and the sense of production is thus the common denominator of the aspirations of the students and the conscious objectives of the working class. The problem of their relations cannot then be posed in terms of rivalry or subordination (even less of antagonism)."<sup>3</sup>

In that declaration, Garaudy ignores the fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism. The fundamental idea of Marxism-Leninism is to affirm the historic role of the work-

<sup>1</sup> See *Stern*, Nr. 49, Hamburg, 1969, S. 144.

<sup>2</sup> See *Der Spiegel*, Nr. 47, 1969, S. 149.

<sup>3</sup> R. Garaudy, *Toute la vérité*, Paris, Editions Bernard Grasset, 1970, p. 41.

ing class. Garaudy adheres to a completely different viewpoint, seeing the working class only as one element in the revolutionary movement. Such autonomy of each of its detachments taking part in the anti-monopoly struggle, however, can actually lead only to a split in the revolutionary forces, isolation of each section within the framework of restricted objectives and to a denial of their basic strategic perspective—that of overturning the existing social system.

In regard to "subordination" amid the anti-imperialist forces, it has existed, does exist and will continue to exist and is known as the hegemony of the proletariat. This leading role of the working class is by no means imposed or decreed from above, it is an objective result of all social and political life in capitalist states.

The crux of the arguments of Garaudy and his sympathisers does not simply imply rejection of the leading role of the working class in the revolutionary struggle; it also means replacing this leading role among working people by that of the intellectuals. Garaudy revises Marxism indirectly on the question of the decisive force of revolutionary struggle and ascribes to the intellectuals the leading role not as a separate force, but as *part* either of the working class or of a new "historical bloc".<sup>1</sup>

Ernst Fischer is another fervent proponent of such ideas. He advances the intellectuals to the forefront of social life in place of the working class; he regards them as the vanguard of all great revolutions, as the binding force of mankind, whose main objective is to create a spiritual unity of the world in all its diversity. At the same time, the intellectuals have to be free of any organisation.

Contemporary revisionists replace the working class as the most revolutionary force by both the intellectuals and their reserves—the students. Garaudy actually condemns student efforts to unite with the working class and he calls upon them for independent revolutionary action. In an interview he gave to the West German magazine *Der Spiegel*, he said, with reference to the May student demonstra-

<sup>1</sup> See R. Garaudy, *Pour un modèle français du socialisme*. Gallimard, Editions Bernard Grasset, 1968, p. 22.



tions in 1968 in France, that "the students ... wanted an alliance with workers, made speeches at the factory gates instead of launching an autonomous, truly revolutionary and powerful student movement in their own universities".<sup>1</sup> His attitude to the student body is apparent from his earlier "theoretical ruminations" in which he allots equal importance to the labour and student movements.

Garaudy sets on the same plane the purposive fight of the working class against the capitalist system and the frequently spontaneous and politically haphazard student movement, and rejects the idea of the working class influencing and leading this movement. Such an attitude to the students is quite deliberate; by giving them an equal status with the working class in his "new historical bloc", he above all has in mind the intellectuals—the principal force of this bloc. After all, students are intellectuals in prospect.

Fischer makes a similar erroneous evaluation of the student movement. In reply to a question put by a journalist on *Der Spiegel* as to what force could resolve the paramount problems facing the world today, Fischer replied: "the younger generation. The student movement is a distinguishing feature of our age. It is not simply a protest of the young against the old, as it was before, but a revolutionary protest of the younger generation against the whole outmoded world around it with that world's moribund institutions and values."<sup>2</sup> He thereby arbitrarily transfers the basic antagonism of capitalist society out of the decisive sphere of production and relations of production. This is a departure from Marxism and an acceptance of an idealistic attitude to social processes.

This is blatantly obvious in the social and political views of Garaudy, Fischer and other modern Right-wing revisionists who justify and encourage a split in the ranks of the working class and the international anti-monopoly movement.

While Lenin's principal idea was that of the proletariat's growing revolutionary potential under imperialism he emphasised that the historic mission of the working class

<sup>1</sup> See *Der Spiegel*, 1971, Nr. 20, S. 120.

<sup>2</sup> *Der Spiegel*, 1969, Nr. 47, S. 149.

in this more favourable situation is by no means fulfilled automatically.

The conditions in which the working class fulfils its historic mission constitute the third aspect of this problem. Both on a purely theoretical basis and by specific illustrations from working-class activity, Lenin showed that if the necessary conditions are absent, the working class is unable completely and successfully to resolve the tasks confronting it. Moreover, the most serious contradictions can arise in this situation between the activity of individual proletarian sections and the interests of the working class taken as a whole.

The most important condition for the working class to fulfil its historic mission was, Lenin felt, the instilling of a class proletarian consciousness in the working people and the transformation of spontaneous workers' protest against their employers into a deliberate battle against the capitalist system as a whole. Class consciousness, in Lenin's opinion, "means the workers' understanding that the only way to improve their conditions and to achieve their emancipation is to conduct a struggle against the capitalist and factory-owner class.... Further, the workers' class consciousness means their understanding that the interests of all the workers of any particular country are identical, that they all constitute one class, separate from all the other classes in society. Finally, the class consciousness of the workers means the workers' understanding to achieve their aims they have to work to influence affairs of state...."<sup>1</sup>

Lenin revealed that an important characteristic of instilling proletarian class consciousness was that this process should be unbroken. The ranks of the proletariat are constantly being augmented by recruits from non-proletarian sections, and the labour movement spends much effort and time on the "training" of new recruits.<sup>2</sup> He wrote that "we must constantly teach more and more sections of this class; we must learn to approach the most backward, the most undeveloped members of this class, those who are least

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, pp. 112-13.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 16, p. 348.



influenced by our science and the science of life, so as to be able to speak to them, to draw closer to them, to raise them steadily and patiently to the level of Social-Democratic consciousness."<sup>1</sup>

This consciousness does not arise in the working class by itself. Lenin stressed: "The working class spontaneously gravitates towards socialism; nevertheless, most widespread (and continuously and diversely revived) bourgeois ideology spontaneously imposes itself upon the working class to a still greater degree."<sup>2</sup>

The worsening of capitalism's internal contradictions and, then, the appearance and victory of the socialist system make it easier to overcome the spontaneous pressure of bourgeois ideology. But it is made more difficult by the sharp increase in the activity of bourgeois ideologists. The International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties of 1969 stated that today imperialism "has recourse to demagoguery, bourgeois reformism and opportunist ideology and policy, and is constantly in quest of new methods to undermine the working-class movement from within and 'integrate' it into the capitalist system".<sup>3</sup>

Today as never before, special purposeful and constant work in uniting the workers' movement and proletarian ideology, scientific socialism, is necessary for developing the proletariat's class consciousness. This work has to be done by a revolutionary proletarian party whose ideology is Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism. Lenin wrote that its task "is to bring definite socialist ideals to the spontaneous working-class movement, to connect this movement with socialist convictions that should attain the level of contemporary science, to connect it with the regular political struggle for democracy as a means of achieving socialism—in a word, to fuse this spontaneous movement into one indestructible whole with the activity of the revolutionary party".<sup>4</sup>

Consequently, another paramount condition for the work-

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 8, p. 454.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 5, p. 386.

<sup>3</sup> *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow, 1969*, p. 12.

<sup>4</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 217.

ing class to fulfil its historic mission is to organise the proletarian vanguard into a revolutionary Marxist party. Lenin made the point that "in its struggle for power the proletariat has no other weapon but organisation".<sup>1</sup> The communist party is the supreme form of political organisation of the working class and without such a party the proletariat cannot sustain a class-conscious struggle; without it the struggle is doomed to failure. Lenin again: "Our principal and fundamental task is to facilitate the political development and the political organisation of the working class."<sup>2</sup>

It is by no means surprising that today the question concerning the role of the communist party has become one of the most acute issues in the ideological struggle. Socialism's opponents do all they can to undermine the role of communist parties and discredit them in the popular mind. They direct their main assault primarily against the fraternal parties in the socialist states. But the advanced detachments of the labour and the whole democratic movement renounce this anti-communist slander. They know from experience that the existence and activity of the communist parties is the most important prerequisite for social progress in the world today.

## 2. Working-Class Unity as a Decisive Condition for Victory

To ensure the unity of the labour movement is one condition necessary for the proletariat to fulfil its historic mission. This is evident from the whole history of struggle of the working people against the bourgeoisie both in the past and in the present, for their direct, immediate and ultimate goals and ideals. Lenin wrote that "a unity is infinitely precious, and infinitely important to the working class. Disunited, the workers are nothing. United, they are everything."<sup>3</sup> And historical experience shows that the im-

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 8, p. 415.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 4, p. 369.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 19, p. 519.



portance of working-class unity increases as the social emancipation of mankind progresses.

The nature of the working class, as a class deprived of ownership of the means of production and existing by selling its labour power, objectively demands that it unite efforts in the battle to overcome its oppressed status and to emancipate labour. Nevertheless, the split in the ranks of the labour movement is a fact that has to be faced.

The sources of this split are to be found in the very conditions of the capitalist mode of production. Marx wrote that "the entire revolutionary movement necessarily finds both its empirical and its theoretical basis in the movement of *private property*—in that of the economy".<sup>1</sup> The workers reject private property which disunites people and fight to do away with it, but it exerts its influence on them, because it is the prevailing form of property in bourgeois society.

A contributing factor is provided by the following circumstances. At the early stage of capitalism, the working class emerges from the peasant class—the class of small-holders. Subsequently, it is continually augmented by new recruits from that class and from other petty-bourgeois groups in the population profoundly affected by the property-owning ideology.

The constant additions to the proletariat from other social groups engender its social heterogeneity, the simultaneous presence in its composition of groups that joined its ranks at different times and, naturally, differ in their level of class experience and class consciousness.

The conditions of living and fighting which the working class enjoy under capitalism differ very greatly. Considerable distinctions exist between individual workers, groups of workers and national contingents in the way they sell their labour power, in the degree to which they are concentrated and organised and in their living and cultural conditions.

By virtue of the above-mentioned differences, an internal rivalry arises and develops, as Marx pointed out, amidst the working class under the impact of private-owner-

<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, Moscow, 1961, p. 102.

ship ideology. It is manifest above all as the working people fight to improve their material and social situation. In its essence, this fight is against capital, but in the prevailing conditions it frequently leads to contradictions between various groups of workers.

After studying this internal rivalry within the working class, Marx stressed that it becomes a serious problem for the proletariat because it develops in an unceasing battle with the bourgeoisie. During this struggle, the bourgeoisie tries to utilise this internal rivalry in its own selfish interests of "divide and rule", trying to transfer it from the purely economic to the political sphere, to perpetuate it without any compunction about the means it uses to do so.

The trend towards internal competition which militates against working-class unity has existed at all stages of capitalist development. As long as private property and capitalism exist, it cannot be eradicated completely. However, alongside this trend that is inimicable to the basic interests of the proletariat, there is another, positive trend towards working-class unity, to the cohesion of all the detachments of labour movement. The latter is stronger, insofar as it follows from the very nature of the working class and relies on the basic objective factors in the labour movement—i.e., the basic community of interests and ultimate objectives and the existence of a common enemy in the form of the world bourgeoisie. The entire path traversed by the labour movement is one of struggle for the triumph of the workers' common interests and for their unity. Progress made along this path creates favourable conditions for the revolutionary movement to triumph. As Engels once wrote, "if the competition of workers among themselves is destroyed, if all determine not to be further exploited by the bourgeoisie, the rule of property is at an end".<sup>1</sup>

Lenin made a thorough study of both these trends and the contention between them in the imperialist epoch and then as the world-wide socialist revolution got underway. He revealed primarily that under imperialism the trend towards a split in the working class obtained new sources;

<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *On Britain*, Moscow, 1962, p. 254.



the possibility of the bourgeoisie pursuing its policy of dividing the proletarian movement increased for the following reasons.

The emergence of monopolies and the concentration of production and capital while leading to a certain levelling out of living and working conditions in the capitalist world accentuates the differences in the conditions of selling labour power between individual regions and countries and, in a certain sense, prepares the ground for internal rivalry within the ranks of the world proletariat. More specifically, what happened was that a complex problem of relations among workers arose as the gap widened in the living and working conditions of workers in developed and developing states, especially the colonies at the initial stages of imperialist development. Thanks to the super-profits of the monopolies from the super-exploitation of the working class in the metropolitan states and the plundering of the colonies, monopoly capital was able to buy off the élite of the working class in the metropolitan states and, relying on it, to undermine the unity of all working people. At the same time, the imperialists tried to counterpose the proletariat of the metropolitan states to that of the colonies or ex-colonies, to widen the gap in living and working standards and to provoke mistrust and even enmity between them.

Lenin made the point that the new epoch created new objective opportunities for a stronger and more effective trend towards proletarian unity. Imperialism and especially state-monopoly capitalism had brought society to a stage where the objective material conditions for socialist revolution attained their maximum maturity within the bounds of capitalism; this greatly increased the possibility for an objective trend towards working-class solidarity, towards their pursuing a class-conscious policy aimed at uniting all sections of the labour movement for the sake of opposing capital.

Furthermore, in imperialist and particularly state-monopoly conditions, the working class swiftly grew and became concentrated at large industrial centres and plants. This is also a powerful factor contributing to the objective trend towards solidarity in the labour movement.

Finally, monopoly oppression and capitalist exploitation of labour, which attain special force in imperialist conditions, invariably produce mounting resistance from the working class and its allies. In these circumstances, the working people better appreciate the need for unity in order to contain imperialism. The desire for unity therefore grows.

In other words, Lenin pointed out that two trends conflict in the imperialist epoch—a trend towards a split and a trend towards a consolidation of proletarian forces; this conflict gets much worse and goes much deeper and wider. Naturally, both these trends acquire certain new forms. In emphasising this, Lenin described their appearance in the imperialist epoch as follows: "On the one hand, there was the tendency to settle down fairly comfortably under capitalism, which was feasible only for a small upper stratum of the proletariat. On the other hand, there was the tendency to lead the whole mass of working and exploited people towards the revolutionary overthrow of capital in general."<sup>1</sup>

The first trend finds its political and organisational expression in the operations of social-democratic parties that pursue an opportunist policy of having the working class acquiesce to capitalist conditions. Lenin revealed the root causes of opportunism in the labour movement and described its characteristics. He showed that opportunism in the imperialist epoch might be both a Right-wing reformist policy and "Left"-wing adventurism. Both forms of opportunism sustain one another. From the viewpoint of the consequences for the labour movement, however, they are both equally dangerous. At critical times, Right-wing and "Left"-wing opportunism join together and objectively act as a weapon of the bourgeoisie wielded against the labour movement.

The second trend, that towards working-class unity in the struggle against the rule of capital, finds its political and organisational expression in the activity of Marxist-Leninist parties of the working class, parties of a new type as the militant revolutionary vanguard capable of inspiring and leading the people to social revolution. The first party of that type was the Bolshevik Party, later to become the Com-

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 216.



munist Party of the Soviet Union, which had been created and inspired by Lenin.

Lenin analysed the historical prospects for the conflict of the two trends in the labour movement and showed that, in the first place, it was a law of the labour movement, a constant factor of its development until the new society arrived. In the second place, in imperialist conditions and particularly as the world-wide socialist revolution developed, the second revolutionary trend, that towards working-class consolidation, gained the upper hand.

Lenin stressed that working-class unity was necessary for ensuring the victory of social revolution. Although capitalist development objectively leads to unity of the labour movement, this unity does not occur by itself. It can only result from a stubborn battle by proletarian revolutionaries. Hence Lenin's conclusion that the fight against opportunism in the labour movement was a major feature of the activity of Marxist parties: "The working class cannot achieve its historic aims without waging a most resolute struggle against both forthright opportunism and social-chauvinism ... and the so-called Centre, which has surrendered the Marxist stand to the chauvinists."<sup>1</sup>

Both in theory and in practice, Lenin showed that the fight against opportunism had as its objective stronger unity of the working class and the inculcation of revolutionary principles. Communists must combat opportunism, he wrote, "from the ideological point of view, with the greatest determination, but in so doing we must see to it that the revolutionary cause, a vital, burning, living cause that is recognised by all and has brought all honest people together, does not suffer".<sup>2</sup> In exposing opportunism and its leaders, Lenin consistently combined this with a fight for a common front of all sections of the labour movement and for the co-operation of various groups of workers in the fight against the common enemy.

The course of historical development has fully borne out the Leninist analysis and its principled conclusions on the conflict between the two trends in the labour movement.

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, pp. 346-47.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 10, p. 23.

This analysis and these conclusions are today a mighty weapon of the Marxist-Leninist proletarian vanguard in its fight for the immediate and future objectives of the working class.

Today, the problem of working-class unity is as vital as ever because the working class has new and great opportunities for developing the world revolutionary process still further. At the same time, the resistance of the class enemy has also become stronger and more energetic, more skilful and subtle. In this situation, unity of the labour movement becomes a truly decisive condition for all future successes. It was for that reason that those who participated in the international meeting of Communists in 1960 concluded that the restoration of working-class unity was a central problem for the revolutionary struggle. That conclusion was affirmed at the International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties in 1969 which declared that "in the new situation, the need for working-class unity has become even more urgent", and that Communists should give "decisive importance" to the cause of unity.<sup>1</sup>

How do these two counteracting trends appear in the labour movement today? What are the forms and characteristics of this struggle?

The divisive tendency continues today. Moreover, several new factors that encourage an even greater split have appeared, as enumerated below.

The above-mentioned changes in the structure of the working class in connection with the scientific and technological revolution and state-monopoly capitalism are adding to the complexity of working-class composition and its social heterogeneity. Additional sources for conflicts thereby appear.

Furthermore, due to the uneven development of capitalism, differences in living conditions in different regions of the capitalist states are growing more acute. We refer, for example, to the basic differences between Northern Ireland, Scotland and various regions of England, between North and South Italy, between the Flemish and Walloon regions of

<sup>1</sup> *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow 1969*, p. 24.



Belgium, and between English- and French-speaking Canada.

The distinctions in levels of development between individual capitalist states remain and continue to play a certain part. They even become more acute with the increasing migration of labour and the internationalisation of the labour market. Many problems are being created by the migration of labour from less-developed to more advanced states—e.g., the influx of Italians, Turks and Greeks into West Germany, Spaniards into Belgium and France. The situation is being aggravated by problems engendered by the widening gap between the advanced capitalist states and the poorly developed ex-colonies. All these factors help to maintain and, in certain circumstances, even to accentuate internal rivalry in the working class both within individual states and internationally.

Finally, there is one more objective factor leading to split in the labour movement—the appearance within the “workers’ aristocracy” of “workers’ bureaucracy”. Lenin wrote: “An entire social stratum, consisting of parliamentarians, journalists, labour officials, privileged office personnel, and certain strata of the proletariat, has sprung up and has become *amalgamated* with its own national bourgeoisie, which has proved fully capable of appreciating and ‘adapting’ it.”<sup>1</sup> With the growth in state-monopoly capitalism today, the numerical strength of the “workers’ bureaucracy” is rapidly growing. The bourgeoisie entices social democrats and trade union functionaries to take part in state activity, in its enterprises and institutions. The size of the permanent apparatus of social-democratic parties, trade unions and co-operatives is also growing. The development of a stratum of “workers’ bureaucracy” strengthens the material basis for working-class disunity. Not all those, of course, who formally belong to “the workers’ bureaucracy” are actively pursuing an opportunist policy; there are many cases when functionaries of social-democratic parties and trade unions or officials of government organisations take an active and consistent part in the struggle for working-class interests.

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 250.

So far we have mentioned fundamental objective factors that encourage a split in the labour movement, but there are also subjective circumstances acting in the same direction and associated with both imperialist policy and the anti-communist policy of the Right-wing social-democratic leaders.

Scientific progress and state-monopoly capitalism have enabled the bourgeoisie to manoeuvre, using greater material resources for splitting the labour movement. These resources are widely used by monopoly capitalism which begrudges no effort to support Right-wing opportunist parties and trade unions and, equally, “Left”-wing extremist groups in the labour movement. Monopoly capital is aware of the fact that the influence of Right-wing social democracy and its policy is declining, while the slogans of “Left”-wing opportunism, which sometimes strike a chord especially among petty-bourgeois groups, are one of the major weapons for fighting communist parties and their policy.

Another subjective factor which encourages labour divisions is the policy of Right-wing social democrats. The fact that the influence of these social-democratic parties and trade unions is more or less stable is largely due to the above-mentioned objective factors and the direct support which Right-wing social democrats receive from the monopolies which use them as a major weapon in their social manoeuvring.

Lastly, the communist parties themselves sometimes make mistakes in their search for solutions to problems of working-class unity.

Labour disunity is today apparent in three ways. First, part of the working class which is deceived by bourgeois (including clerical) parties openly follows the bourgeoisie—i.e., actually supports the policy of various bourgeois groups. Second, the labour movement includes parties that are revolutionary (communist) and opportunist (social democrats). Lastly, a split exists in the trade union movement in which there are both revolutionary and reformist unions (including clerical unions).

As we can see, the new developments in the working class and labour movement which help to maintain labour dis-



unity differ little from those factors that existed in Lenin's day. A Leninist analysis today enables us correctly to evaluate the objective and subjective factors that cause labour disunity in capitalist states.

Lenin's forecast that the trend towards a consolidation of the working class will prevail is being completely vindicated today. What are the modern objective factors encouraging this development?

The major factor is the advance in world socialism, its successes and its impact on the capitalist world. The resounding successes of socialism show the importance of working-class unity and the prospects the labour movement may have when it establishes that unity. The progress of the international proletarian revolution, above all the achievements of the new socialist world, convince widest sections of the workers of the correctness of a revolutionary path in transforming society and of the need for the international proletariat to be united. The widening opportunities of revolutionary struggle due to the changing international balance of power and the growing ways and means of socialist revolution help to draw together the positions of Communists and social democrats and increasingly remove obstacles in the way of their effective co-operation.

Another objective factor favouring unity is the development of the working class itself. As it increases in size and in degree of organisation and culture, as it achieves success in the struggle for its social and material interests, the proletariat increases its class consciousness and unity. The changing structure of the proletariat implies a certain leveling of living and working conditions for workers in advanced capitalist states and intensifies their desire for unity.

Lastly, in speaking of the international working class, there is no doubt that growing unity is encouraged by the overall growth and increase in political awareness of the working class in the Third World under the impact of world socialism and the successes of the labour movement in advanced capitalist states.

At the same time, we must note the great importance of subjective factors. This refers primarily to the activity of communist and workers' parties which are nowadays con-

ducting their struggle for unity in the labour movement with increasing skill and persistence.

Another subjective factor is the loss of prestige by Right-wing social democracy. At the early stages, Right-wing social democracy declared its hostility to capitalism and, in many cases, was a real opposition to the bourgeoisie. Since the last war, Right-wing social-democratic leaders have operated with complete frankness in defending state-monopoly capitalism. Originally, the social democrats had maintained that both they and the Communists had a common goal, although they may have differed on their understanding of how to achieve that goal. Since the war, they have made no bones about the fact that they now have objectives other than the revolutionary transformation of society. The declaration of the Socialist International, adopted in 1962 in Oslo, actually appealed for an abandonment of the idea of abolishing capitalism and emphasised the need for adapting the labour movement to the interests of the capitalist system in a certain embellished or renovated form.

The new theoretical premises of the Right-wing social democrats are calculated for those sections of the workers ready to acquiesce to existing capitalist conditions and to the temporary high level of business activity which has enabled them partially to improve their situation through niggardly reforms. It is patently obvious, however, that these calculations are very restricted and the future is bound to cause opportunism a serious setback. Indeed, no market conditions can remove the contradictions from the capitalist mode of production. Furthermore, a high level of business activity ultimately leads to the accumulation of serious prerequisites for a new exacerbation that leads, in turn, to more acute class battles. That is what has happened. It is hardly surprising that the Right-wing opportunist policy of social democracy should evoke a mounting popular opposition.

Their own political exposure has discredited the social democrats even more. The open support of Right-wing social democrats for imperialist blocs and the arms race has caused them more practical setbacks than their blatant theoretical betrayal. Their support for imperialist colonialist and neo-colonialist policy has caused them immense harm. This



is especially apparent in such parties as the British Labour Party which, throughout the post-war period, has defended the interests of British monopoly capital rather than those of the newly liberated peoples and an alliance between the British proletariat and the people in the ex-colonies. This is again manifest of late in the stance taken by the Labour leaders in relation to the Irish issue. It is hardly surprising that the Socialist International has been unable to extend its influence in any worthwhile way in the ex-colonies. The political parties of a social-democratic bent which have arisen in these countries usually refuse to recognise the Socialist International as representing their interests.

In regard to domestic policy, one must emphasise that the experience of recent decades shows quite convincingly the limitations of social-democratic reformism. This is particularly evident in such countries as Britain, Austria, Belgium and the Scandinavian states, where social democrats have held power for long periods. Although they had good opportunities with broad worker backing to tackle major social problems, they made no progress in that direction. Their main concern both in domestic and foreign policy was to ensure the "normal functioning" of capitalist society. Naturally, the existence of social-democratic governments brought the working class (in Scandinavia, for example) certain material improvements. However, these improvements normally affected only secondary issues and when the slightest difficulty arose, social-democratic cabinets immediately leapt to the defence of capitalist interests. What was the result? A mounting popular disenchantment with social-democratic parties, their defeat at elections, and serious friction within their ranks sometimes leading to open splits.

The contradictions of the social-democratic movement are becoming particularly acute today when the situation is producing an increasingly sharp polarisation of social and political forces. The actual state of affairs demands that political movements make it perfectly clear whether they are for or against the monopolies. It is becoming more and more difficult to take an undisguised opportunist line.

Finally, the social democrats have lost ground after the exposure of the futility of their anti-communist policy.

Although, one after the other, their anti-communist myths have been shattered by the growing successes of socialism, this is not the crux of the issue. The important thing is that the practical comparison of the historical results attained by the two countervailing trends in the labour movement convinces the working people of the correctness of the communist and the fallaciousness of social-democratic policy. During the last half century, Communists have established workers' government in a quarter of the world and made a practical start to implementing their ultimate aims which meet the aspirations of all working people. Meanwhile, although the social democrats have been in power in several countries, sometimes for twenty to thirty years since the last war, they have nowhere managed to abolish the capitalist system, nor to start building a new socialist society. This lesson is obvious for any thinking workingman.

The social-democratic movement as a whole is suffering an increasingly profound crisis due to the exposure of opportunist theory and practice. It would, of course, be premature to say that the social-democratic trend in the labour movement is on the verge of collapse. Yet there is no doubt that on a number of major points the social democrats are beginning to cede ground.

Problems within social-democratic parties are becoming more acute, especially between the rank-and-file members and the leadership of these parties. In some cases this has led to the appearance of "Left"-wing trends and, sometimes, actual splits in the parties. Thus, the Dutch Labour Party split in 1957 and lost its "Left" wing; in 1958 the French Socialist Party split, followed by the Italian Socialist Party, from which an Italian Socialist Party of Proletarian Unity was formed. A second split occurred in the Italian Socialist Party in 1969. In recent years, the French Socialist Party and the Scandinavian social democrats, among whom "Left"-wing socialists have become very active, have suffered a serious crisis; and in 1970 the Socialist Party of Luxembourg split.

In summing up the development of the international social democrats during the 1960's, the 1969 International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties declared in its final Document: "Facts and the experience gained by



the working class in the course of their struggles, and the sharp criticism of opportunist views by the Communist Parties—which remains a constant task—deepen the crisis of reformist concepts. A differentiation is taking place in the ranks of Social Democracy, and this is also reflected in the leadership. Some of the leaders come out in defence of monopoly capital and imperialism. Others are more inclined to reckon with the demands of the working masses in the economic and social fields, and in the questions of the struggle for peace and progress.”<sup>1</sup>

It is indisputable that the latter provide a better prospect for overcoming divisions and establishing workers’ unity, despite the fact that a relative preponderance of social democrats over Communists still exists in the capitalist world. Only in a few countries of Western Europe (France, Italy and Finland) are the communist parties larger than the social-democratic parties. In most countries, the social democrats are still more numerous than Communists. Taking Western Europe as a whole, Communists receive some eight per cent of votes, and social democrats—some 36 per cent at general elections. Communist parties have about 2.5 million members, while social-democratic parties have virtually four times more. If one takes the historical trend, however, it shows a gradual shift in the balance of power between the two sides in favour of the Communists. The number of social democrats grew 2.6 times (from 6.3 to 17 million) between 1925 and 1968. During the same period, the number of Communists increased 28-fold, from 1.6 million to almost 50 million.

The historical trend is for the communist parties steadily to gain ground and, despite all the difficulties, to extend their influence. The future will show increasingly the correctness of the policy pursued by Communists and the incorrectness of that pursued by the social democrats.

What are the prospects for healing the split in the working class?

Lenin was of the opinion that there could be various ways of achieving labour unity. One was to unite all the healthy

<sup>1</sup> *International Meeting of Communist and Workers’ Parties, Moscow 1969*, p. 24.

forces of the labour movement in a single Marxist-Leninist party, while other parties that deviated from the workers’ policy would discredit themselves and gradually leave the political arena. That was the state of affairs, for example, in Russia.

Another possibility which Lenin forecast and which materialised in several countries that have now become socialist was to unite socialists and Communists into a single party on the principles of Marxism-Leninism.

The third way (which ultimately must lead either to the first or to the second, although it is a long way) is that of a militant co-operation of various sections and parties of the working class in a campaign for their common objectives; this is the path of a united front and of concerted actions by workers’ parties while temporarily retaining their ideological differences.

In campaigning for a united workers’ front, Marxists-Leninists realise that today the Communists and social-democrats are divided by serious ideological differences. And they are by no means prepared to accommodate themselves to social-democratic ideology and they conduct a vigorous struggle against it. However, as stated in the Declaration of the International Meeting of Communist and Workers’ Parties in 1960, Communists consider that ideological differences should not hamper joint action against imperialism and exploitation and in favour of democracy and peace. During this struggle, the parties will inevitably come closer together, understand each other better and remove superficial differences that have arisen during half a century of bitter polemic between revolutionaries and reformists; they will create conditions for the social-democratic supporters to take consistently class and revolutionary positions.

In their struggle for communist-socialist joint action, the communist parties do not adhere to a single pattern. Wherever possible, they favour agreement between leaders of communist and social-democratic parties. Where this is not possible, they choose other forms of obtaining unity of action—sometimes on a local scale. The main aspect of the unity policy is to obtain practical popular unity and practical co-operation within the bounds of each factory, district, region and the entire country in the fight to realise the



specific slogans for improving the living and working conditions of the working people. A number of important successes have undoubtedly been made in that direction. Agreement between Communists and socialists in France, the now traditional co-ordinated actions of Communists and Left-wing socialists in Italy and the growing contacts between Communists and Left-wing socialists in Finland, Japan and Uruguay are just some of the facts that show the progress of uniting the efforts of the working class in various countries.

But that is only a beginning. The problem of uniting the actions of Communists and socialists is, on the whole, far from being resolved. To be realistic, one has to admit that the path to unity is strewn with many obstacles and, first and foremost, by the hardened anti-communism of many Right-wing social-democratic leaders. If we put the relationship between socialists and Communists in a historical perspective, however, it is clear that the possibilities for overcoming the split in the working class are increasing all the time.

The report delivered to the 24th Congress of the Communist Party of the USSR stated that, "in accordance with the line laid down by the 1969 International Meeting, the CPSU is prepared to develop cooperation with the Social-Democrats both in the struggle for peace and democracy, and in the struggle for socialism, without, of course, making any concessions in ideology and revolutionary principles. However, this line of the Communists has been meeting with stubborn resistance from the Right-wing leaders of the Social-Democrats. Our Party has carried on and will continue to carry on an implacable struggle against any attitudes which tend to subordinate the working-class movement to the interests of monopoly capital, and to undermine the cause of the working people's struggle for peace, democracy and socialism."<sup>1</sup>

One should emphasise that the growing concerted action by various trade unions is today acquiring increasing importance, along with the developing contacts between polit-

<sup>1</sup> 24th Congress of the CPSU, p. 28.

ical organisations of the working class. Trade unions have increased their role in social and political affairs of various capitalist states. One should bear in mind that frequently the Left-wing forces of the social-democratic movement which oppose the monopolies most energetically are to be found in the ranks of the trade unions. Typical in this connection are the conflicts between the trade unions and the social-democratic parties which now and again break out, such as that between the Labour Party and the TUC in Great Britain, between the German Social Democratic Party and the All-German Party in West Germany, and between the Belgian Socialist Party and the Fédération Générale du Travail de Belgique.

A united front of various types of trade unions in Italy, France and Japan has become a fact that has brought success in the struggle for workers' rights in recent years. New prospects are opening up as a result of a shift to the Left in some trade unions in the USA. This process is gaining momentum: a direct split has occurred in the AFL-CIO. It is hardly fortuitous that the turbulent events in American trade unions have occurred in step with the new upsurge in the struggle of the working people in America for peace in Vietnam, for civil rights and for the satisfaction of social and economic demands. The trade unions of Denmark, Canada, Australia and New Zealand have also become much more active of late.

Another important factor for unity has been, finally, the actions taken by communist parties to establish contact and develop a dialogue with believers in the ranks of the working class. This dialogue has occurred in Italy, France, Spain and Belgium; British Communists, too, have taken their first, and successful, steps in that direction. The communist press is exposing the imperialist policy of suppressing the legitimate rights of the working people of Northern Ireland, a policy intended to fan the superficial rivalry that exists between Catholics and Protestants.

We must also mention in conclusion one more aspect of the problem of unity. Fewer than 10 per cent of the industrial workers are organised in political working-class parties in developed capitalist states. About 30 per cent are members of trade unions. To ensure the unity of this nucleus of



the working class is an important, if not decisive, affair. However, it is very important also to involve into active political and trade union activity the more than two-thirds of the workers who at present remain outside workers' organisations.

Today, the central problem of further progress for the labour movement lies in overcoming the split and establishing unity of action of all sections of the movement. In the past, working-class disunity saved the bourgeoisie in many European states after the October Revolution in Russia. It saved the bourgeoisie in certain countries after World War II. Labour unity today would open the way for the working class to take power in all the advanced capitalist states.

Working-class unity is an insistent and vital demand. The 1969 Meeting declared that "the policy of unity affords the working-class movement greater opportunities in the anti-imperialist struggle and makes it possible to bring into this struggle that section of the proletariat which is still unorganised or still follows bourgeois parties. Communists will improve their political and ideological work with an eye to securing working-class unity."<sup>1</sup>

### 3. Class Alliances of the Proletariat

Lenin devoted a great deal of attention to the workers' class alliances under imperialism. He wrote that "the proletarian revolution is impossible without the sympathy and support of the overwhelming majority of the working people for their vanguard—the proletariat".<sup>2</sup> In his work on this problem, Lenin enriched Marxism with several principal notions which lie behind the theory and practice of communist parties right up to the present day.

On the basis of his analysis of class contradictions in the imperialist epoch, Lenin came to the conclusion that in the new circumstances socialist revolution "cannot be anything other than an outburst of mass struggle on the part of all

<sup>1</sup> *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow, 1969*, p. 25.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 60.

and sundry oppressed and discontented elements. Inevitably, sections of the petty bourgeoisie and of the backward workers will participate in it—without such participation, mass struggle is impossible, without it no revolution is possible—and just as inevitably will they bring into the movement their prejudices, their reactionary fantasies, their weaknesses and errors. But *objectively* they will attack capital, and the class-conscious vanguard of the revolution, the advanced proletariat, expressing this objective truth of a variegated and discordant, motley and outwardly fragmented, mass struggle, will be able to unite and direct it, capture power, seize the banks, expropriate the trusts which all hate (though for different reasons!), and introduce other dictatorial measures which in their totality will amount to the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the victory of socialism."<sup>1</sup>

Lenin defined the specific tasks of the proletariat and its party in this connection and emphasised that a vital condition for victory over the bourgeoisie must be the ability of revolutionary parties "to link up, maintain the closest contact, and—if you wish—merge, in certain measure, with the broadest masses of the working people—primarily with the proletariat, but also with the non-proletarian masses of working people".<sup>2</sup>

Lenin combined this principled approach to the importance of workers' alliance in fulfilling their historic mission with a detailed treatment of the problems of the workers' attitude to the various social sections of the society which could become its allies at different stages of the struggle for socialism.

Like Marx and Engels, Lenin too considered the poor peasants as the workers' major ally. He attached special importance to the worker-peasant alliance, believing that the fate of the peasants greatly determined the fate of revolutionary change in Russia. At the same time, one should stress that in examining this problem Lenin never confined himself merely to Russian experience and Russian conditions. He approached the agrarian-peasant question from an

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 22, p. 356.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 31, pp. 24-25.



international viewpoint. He wrote that "the fundamental and principal trend of capitalism is the displacement of small-scale by large-scale production, both in industry and in agriculture. But this displacement should not be interpreted *merely* as immediate expropriation. Displacement also implies the ruin of the small farmers and a worsening of conditions on their farms, a process that may go on for years and decades. This deterioration assumes a variety of forms, such as the small farmer's overwork or malnutrition, his heavy debts, worse feed and poorer care of livestock in general, poorer husbandry—cultivation, fertilisation, and the like—as well as technical stagnation on the farm, etc."<sup>1</sup>

On the evidence of different countries, Lenin revealed that the impoverishment of the peasants and the displacement of small-scale by large-scale production lead to profound social differentiation in the countryside. On the one hand, the number of large capitalist entrepreneurs grows in agriculture; on the other, the number of poor people who comprise the semi-proletarian elements of agriculture grows even faster. Simultaneously, there is a process of impoverishment of middle peasants, most of whom join the ranks of poor peasants, while a small part becomes capitalist entrepreneurs.

In his analysis of agrarian relations and of the developing struggle of the peasants in the imperialist epoch, Lenin noted that while in the past the peasant struggle was basically anti-feudal and was therefore a component of the bourgeois revolution, the struggle now was directed against monopoly capital and was becoming part of the world-wide proletarian revolution. On this basis, Lenin formulated the idea of a union between the working class and the poor peasants as a force capable of guaranteeing victory to the socialist revolution; he propounded a policy for the proletariat and its party in relation to the peasants under the new circumstances.

Lenin saw the following basic elements as part of the problem of the worker-peasant alliance.

First, the alliance was needed not only by the peasants for whom it was the only real answer to their impoverished

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 70.

status; it was needed by the working class for whom it was a condition for guaranteeing the victory of the proletarian cause.

Second, the working class was to play the leading role in the alliance, not to obtain privileges for itself, but to guarantee success for the common cause.

Third, the worker-peasant alliance would not be the same everywhere, it would take various forms depending on the circumstances in different states.

This Leninist concept provided the proletariat and its revolutionary parties with guidelines in their fight for socialism and it has fully retained its importance today.

In the advanced capitalist states where one can see most clearly how farming progresses under the domination of contemporary bourgeois relations, large-scale and monopoly capital have today become the dominating force in the countryside. The measures taken in most countries to establish state-monopoly control over agriculture are the highest form of monopoly control of farming. Their main purpose is to encourage large farms and to extinguish small-holdings.

State-monopoly control of agriculture greatly speeds up its evolution along a capitalist path and leads to further stratification of the peasants as an independent class. It is worth recalling Lenin's notion that the peasants continue to be an independent class only "*inasmuch* as serf-owning relationships still exist".<sup>1</sup> With the introduction and incursion of capitalism into the countryside, some farmers and peasants become capitalist entrepreneurs, while others become farm labourers and yet others continue to exist and reproduce as small-commodity owners whose position becomes increasingly unstable and whose number steadily declines. This process has long been underway in the USA, Canada and Australia and, with its specific features, it is now evident in Europe. In this situation, when the proportion of peasants in the social structure is small, the working class continues to strengthen its battle alliance with the poor peasants and simultaneously develops its relations with the intermediate urban layers, especially with the bulk of working

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 6, p. 116.



intellectuals whose interests and status in the social and productive relations of state-monopoly capitalism and scientific progress have come to be identifiable with those of the working class; this has created favourable conditions for a firm strategic alliance between them and the proletariat in the campaign for socialism.

As social stratification continues, the class struggle in the countryside spreads. Farm labourers increasingly protest at the oppression from capitalist owners (this happens often in countries like Italy) and the small peasants and farmers, squeezed out by land magnates, rise up in protest. A feature of the class struggle in the countryside in advanced capitalist states today is that the intermediate peasant landholders finding themselves also threatened with bankruptcy are manifesting a high degree of activity. On the whole, this is a struggle between the small rural bourgeoisie, on the one hand, and large-scale capital and the monopolies, on the other. The acuteness of class battles in the countryside shows that "the working peasants remain the chief allies of the working class, despite the fact that their number has declined considerably in the advanced capitalist countries".<sup>1</sup>

In ascribing particular attention to the peasants as allies of the proletariat, Lenin more than once emphasised the importance of the working class establishing an alliance also with urban middle strata.

When we look at his views on this question, we must bear in mind that in the first quarter of the century the so-called traditional intermediate strata of the town—the small traders, small industrialists and artisans—still displayed an extreme conservatism (it was they in Russia who provided recruits for the extremist Black Hundreds). Their evolution to the side of the proletariat took the same path as that of the peasants, though at a much slower pace. That is why Lenin devoted much more attention not to these traditional strata, but to the new intermediate strata who were not a remnant of the old social structure but an offspring of capitalist development in the era of monopoly control. Lenin

<sup>1</sup> *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow 1969*, p. 150.

wrote: "A number of new 'middle strata' are inevitably brought into existence again and again by capitalism (appendages to the factory, work at home, small workshops scattered all over the country to meet the requirements of big industries, such as the bicycle and automobile industries, etc.)".<sup>1</sup> It was this section of the urban intermediate strata, being under great pressure from the monopolies, that was able to join the proletariat in opposing them.

Finally, Lenin regarded it necessary to attract the intellectuals and white-collar workers to the side of the working class. He wrote: "No forces of darkness can withstand an alliance of the scientists, the proletariat and the technologists."<sup>2</sup>

These Leninist instructions have acquired particular force today when state-monopoly capitalism has confronted the intermediate urban strata with the problem of fighting for their very existence no less than the peasants—and in some countries even more acutely.

In regard to the contemporary urban petty bourgeoisie, one should note above all the extreme contradictoriness of their development. Their numerical strength, with rare exceptions, declines more slowly than that of the peasants and, in some countries, even increases somewhat. Bourgeois ideologists claim on this basis that Communists were wrong in their forecasts: Communists are said to believe that the intermediate urban strata will be impoverished while they "prosper". That is completely wrong. The position of the urban petty bourgeoisie is conspicuous today for its increasing instability. A vast number of small businesses fold up every year and most newly founded undertakings exist only one, two or three years before floundering. Between 1951 and 1958 in the USA, for example, some 3.4 million businesses were started, while in the same period 2.8 million went bankrupt and 3.4 million changed hands.

Meanwhile, the urban petty bourgeoisie in almost every capitalist state is experiencing radical changes in its type of business and especially its status in production. Almost everywhere the petty bourgeoisie is being squeezed out of

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 15, p. 39.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 30, p. 402.



material production and forced into services or trade. Urban development is producing a need for a great number of furniture stores, petrol stations, small repair and service shops. At the same time, an increasing number of small owners are ceasing to be owners of their own shops, cafés and petrol stations and are becoming leaseholders or managers of branches of the big monopolies. Formally they act as property owners but in fact they are petty-bourgeois subcontractors to big business.

That part of the middle strata which includes office workers, scientists, engineers and technicians and self-employed persons has particularly increased. According to the statistics of the World Federation of Trade Unions, as many as 25 per cent of all those employed in industry in capitalist states now comprise engineering and technological personnel. The proportion of people employed in the service industry in the active population of advanced capitalist states has grown from 23 per cent in 1920 to 31 per cent in 1950 and almost 42 per cent in 1968. A large part of the "new" intermediate strata is concentrated in this sphere.

On the whole, the urban intermediate strata of modern society, whose size today exceeds that of the peasants, are an important ally of the working class.

Post-war development shows that in the advanced capitalist states the intermediate strata (especially the "new") increasingly oppose monopoly policy. Among the comparatively widespread manifestations of the class struggles in recent years have been the independent protests of doctors, teachers, journalists and other groups of intellectuals in defence of their rights in France, Belgium, Sweden, Greece and the USA, and the protests of small traders and café-owners in France, Italy, the Netherlands and Belgium.

One cannot say, nonetheless, that these strata have already taken a working-class attitude. Their protest against monopoly policy is often anarchic and sometimes hostile to the proletariat.

In emphasising the importance of establishing a close alliance between the working class and the intermediate strata of the urban population, the International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties in 1969 inscribed in its final Document that "the convergence of interests of the

working class, farmers, urban middle strata and intellectuals as well as their growing co-operation reduce the social foundations of monopoly power, sharpen its internal contradictions and promote the mobilisation of broad masses of people for the struggle against monopolies and imperialism".<sup>1</sup>

Thus, the very course of social development and the intensification of the basic social contradictions of capitalism tend to create a wider social base for the revolutionary struggle which is spearheaded primarily against monopoly capital. A basis has arisen for creating a broad anti-monopoly alliance between the proletariat and the urban and rural intermediate strata. This possibility can only be realised, however, as a result of energetic struggle by the working class and its political parties.

One may recall Lenin's advice that the establishment of alliances between the working class and other social groups must be based on the inviolable principle that the proletariat and its organisations retain their class independence. He wrote: "To the Marxist the problem is simply to avoid either of two extremes: on the one hand, not to fall into the error of those who say that, from the standpoint of the proletariat, we are in no way concerned with any immediate and temporary non-proletarian tasks, and on the other, not to allow the proletariat's co-operation in the attainment of the immediate democratic tasks to dim its class consciousness and its class distinctiveness."<sup>2</sup>

Nowadays, the practical co-operation of the anti-monopoly forces is steadily developing everywhere; it varies in character and form. One obvious illustration of the co-operation in practice was the mass strikes in France, Italy and Japan during the 1960's in which urban and rural middle strata took part alongside the working class. A definite shift of public opinion to the Left is taking place.

The process of forming anti-monopoly coalitions in advanced capitalist states is, of course, still far from complete. But it is quite obvious that the coalitions are growing

<sup>1</sup> *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow 1969*, pp. 25-26.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 446.



and gaining strength and that the ranks of the opponents of the monopolies are becoming more numerous and organised.

What are the historical bounds of the alliance between the working class and the non-proletarian groups in town and country? Will this alliance exist only during the period of struggle for restricting and eliminating monopoly power or will its participants be able to take their joint struggle further for socialist ideals?

In his treatment of this question, Lenin referred to inevitable changes in the composition of the workers' allies as the revolution progressed. In referring to the peasant-worker alliance in Russia, he wrote: "*First*, with the 'whole' of the peasants against the monarchy, against the landowners, against medievalism (and to that extent the revolution remains bourgeois, bourgeois-democratic). *Then*, with the poor peasants, with the semi-proletarians, with all the exploited, *against capitalism*, including the rural rich, the kulaks, the profiteers, and to that extent the revolution becomes a *socialist* one."<sup>1</sup>

In other words, as the revolution developed, a certain part of the workers' allies deserted them and even became hostile on occasions. The instincts of private ownership gained the upper hand over the basic worker interests of the non-proletarian workers to whom socialism opened up the prospect of genuine emancipation.

In its composition, the present anti-monopoly coalition is substantially wider than the alliance which existed in Russia under the leadership of the working class on the eve of the October 1917 Revolution. The composition of this coalition formed around the working class may evidently become somewhat narrower as the anti-monopoly problems are solved and the anti-capitalist and socialist problems come up. One may assume, however, that this will occur on a much smaller scale than it did in Russia during the socialist revolution. Indeed, today there are compelling external and internal factors that encourage a certain reduction in the scale of petty-bourgeois vacillations and that might impel the petty bourgeoisie to take a turn to the Left.

The following may be said to be the internal factors.

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 37, p. 300.

First, the growth of monopoly capitalism into state-monopoly capitalism has sharply increased monopoly pressures on the middle strata. An increasing number of small businessmen both in town and country are actually losing their autonomy and becoming auxiliary workers for the big monopolies: as a result, they are progressively losing their petty-bourgeois illusions as private owners. Both the peasants and the urban middle strata are increasingly becoming aware that their dream of becoming big businessmen is unattainable and that their only prospect seems to be gradual proletarianisation.

Second, on this basis there develop acute feelings of hostility by the middle strata towards the monopolies which are sometimes expressed in a vigorous opposition to monopoly tyranny.

Third, under such circumstances the rapprochement between the petty bourgeoisie and the proletariat becomes more than an objective trend—it becomes a real live political issue.

Fourth, all this is immensely helped by the strengthening of the social and political positions of the working class and the activity of its revolutionary parties that pursue a policy of active co-operation with the middle strata and energetic defence of their interests against the monopolies.

The mounting impact of world socialism is the prime external factor reducing vacillation among the middle strata.

Taking all these factors into account, the participants in the International Communist Meetings in 1960 and 1969 indicated in their documents that they regarded the anti-monopoly coalition as a relatively sound alliance which should exist not only at the stage of the anti-monopoly struggle but should continue into the period of fighting for a socialist revolution and the building of socialism.

The correctness of this conclusion is confirmed by the experience accumulated in the European People's Democracies. The working class there enjoyed the support both of the poor peasants and the stratum of intellectuals who attached themselves to the proletariat and of the middle strata in town and country both at the democratic and at the socialist revolution stages. In other words, the broad coalition which formed around the proletariat during the general



democratic fight against fascism basically remained. Of course, the major part of the intermediate bourgeoisie deserted it, but its size and influence were insignificant.

It is understandable that communist parties that take account of all these new elements should see the interests of the given strata both in their current and in their long-term plans. It is a matter of giving a certain perspective to them for the period of building socialism. In drawing up their programmes, the parties base themselves on the ideas of Lenin, on the practical experience accumulated in the socialist states and on the specific conditions in their own countries.

When one takes all these circumstances into account, one may with complete justification state that the problem of an anti-monopoly coalition is also essentially a problem of forming a mass political army for socialist revolution. This is what determines its importance and the struggle which is waged around it.

When the mass of middle strata become involved in the struggle, however, they do not immediately take a consistent proletarian and socialist line. That can only be expected to happen later and, as the experience of the Soviet Union and the other socialist states would indicate, will probably happen in full measure after the revolution.

Yet the very fact that these strata which stand half-way between the two sides due to their social nature are joining the struggle on the side of the proletariat is symptomatic that the fight against the monopolies is acquiring a really national character. The front line of this struggle is steadily broadening. On the other hand, the entry of these vacillating elements into the anti-monopoly struggle is a sure sign that more and more working people are waking up and joining the revolutionary struggle headed by the working class.

## WAYS AND MEANS OF GAINING POWER

The vital issue of socialist struggle has always been that of choosing the right path to revolution and form of revolutionary struggle for the working class to gain power.

### 1. Marxism-Leninism and Revolutionary Struggle

During the pre-monopoly capitalist period, Marx and Engels considered it most likely that the proletariat would gain power through armed struggle. At that time, the bourgeoisie was strong enough to resist the proletariat and had the extensive support of world reactionary forces with which the international alliance of working people could not contend. Indeed, in most class confrontations between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, the latter, always and everywhere, fired first, launched civil war, submitted the workers to bloody repressions and called in punitive brigades of the bourgeoisie from other countries to quell the proletarian struggle. Yet even then, Marx and Engels did not regard armed struggle as the only means available to the proletariat and conceded that in certain circumstances the proletariat might in some capitalist states gain power peacefully. Marx, for example, affirmed, in his speech "On the Hague Congress", the inevitability of the working class winning political power, and noted: "But we have by no means affirmed that this goal would be achieved by identical means."

"We know of the allowances we must make for the institutions, customs and traditions of the various countries; and



we do not deny that there are countries such as America, England, and I would add Holland if I knew your institutions better, where the working people may achieve their goal by peaceful means. If that is true, we must also recognise that in most of the continental countries it is force that will have to be the lever of our revolutions; it is force that we shall some day have to resort to in order to establish a reign of labour."<sup>1</sup>

Marx therefore advised that in choosing the path of revolution one should reckon with the institutions, customs and traditions of various countries and not mechanically apply the experience of revolutionary struggle of some countries to others. In mentioning America, Britain and Holland as countries which did not yet possess a well-developed bureaucratic state machinery, Marx emphasised that it was there that the proletariat would find it easiest to overcome the resistance of the bourgeoisie by peaceful means.

The working class, he said, once it had taken power, would have to dispense with the old policy that maintained moribund institutions, dismantle the old state machinery and create a new apparatus that expressed the will of proletarian dictatorship. The "lever of revolution" would have to be force, revolutionary violence, irrespective of the path—peaceful or non-peaceful—which the working class chose for revolution.

In conceding that the British working class might gain power peacefully, Marx, according to Engels, "never forgot to add that he hardly expected the English ruling classes to submit, without a 'pro-slavery rebellion', to this peaceful and legal revolution."<sup>2</sup> In reply to a correspondent of *The World*, who was extremely optimistic in regard to prospects for peaceful revolution in Britain, Marx said: "I am not so sanguine on that point as you. The English middle class has always shown itself willing enough to accept the verdict of the majority, so long as it enjoyed the monopoly of the voting power. But mark me, as soon as it finds itself

<sup>1</sup> K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* (in three volumes), Vol. 2, pp. 292-93.

<sup>2</sup> K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1972, p. 17.

outvoted on what it considers vital questions we shall see here a new slave-owner's war."<sup>1</sup>

Marx wrote that if, say, in Britain and the USA, the working class were to gain a majority in Parliament or in Congress, it could legally rescind the laws and abolish the institutions that stood in its way. "And yet the 'peaceful' movement would become a 'violent' movement when it met *opposition* from those interested in the old regime; and if these latter as a result of violence would be defeated (like the American movement and the French revolution), they would rise up against 'legal' violence."<sup>2</sup> Marx is here voicing the opinion that not the proletariat but ultimately the bourgeoisie would force upon the proletariat various forms of struggle and that, depending upon the degree of bourgeois resistance, a peaceful path might and should give way to armed struggle.

In the circumstances of relative quiet and rapid capitalist development between 1870 and the 1890's in Western Europe, the ruling classes, under pressure from the working class and other working people, introduced universal suffrage for men in the principal European states. Socialists were elected for the first time to German, French, Danish and other parliaments. The German Social-Democratic Party achieved the greatest success in the parliamentary struggle. Despite the Exceptional Law invoked by Bismarck against the socialists (1878-1890), the party cleverly combined legal and illegal forms of struggle and steadily extended its influence among the common people. At the Reichstag elections in 1884 the number of votes gained by the socialists exceeded half a million, while at the 1887 elections it was more than three-quarters of a million, and the 1890 elections gave socialist deputies 35 seats and about 1,500,000 votes.

The social-democratic theoreticians Bernstein and Kautsky cited the new situation of political activity in justifying their absolutising the peaceful forms of proletarian struggle for power. Engels took a different line. In his Introduction to Marx's work *The Class Struggles in France*, written in 1895,

<sup>1</sup> *Woodhull and Claflin's Weekly*, New York, 12.8.1871.

<sup>2</sup> *Arkhiv Marks'a i Engels'a*, Vol. I (VI), Moscow, Partizdat 1932, p. 397 (in Russian).



Engels also brought up the question of changing proletarian tactics: "The mode of struggle of 1848 is today obsolete in every respect, and this is a point which deserves closer examination on the present occasion."<sup>1</sup> He showed that the economic revolution underway since 1848 and embracing the entire continent "still had great capacity for expansion".<sup>2</sup> The various "revolutions from above" carried out by the ruling classes of Europe removed the nationalities question from its important place in the largest states of Europe: "The independence and internal unity of the great nations, with the exception of Poland, had become a fact."<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, new development in the military field, weapon and artillery improvements and the possibility of swift troop deployment by rail made street fighting conditions much less favourable for civilian fighters and more favourable for the armed forces. "If conditions have changed in the case of war between nations, this is no less true in the case of the class struggle. The time of surprise attacks, of revolutions carried through by small conscious minorities at the head of unconscious masses, is past. Where it is a question of a complete transformation of the social organisation, the masses themselves must also be in it, must themselves already have grasped what is at stake, what they are going in for, body and soul. The history of the last fifty years has taught us that. But in order that the masses may understand what is to be done, long, persistent work is required, and it is just this work that we are now pursuing, and with a success which drives the enemy to despair."<sup>4</sup>

Speaking of the new opportunities for work among the masses, Engels largely had in mind the great expansion of forms and methods of party activities at a time of bourgeois legality and parliamentarism. These parties, united in a single great international army of socialists, now possessed a new weapon of class struggle—universal suffrage—which they could use as the best means for "getting in touch with

<sup>1</sup> K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* (in three volumes), Vol. 1, p. 190.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 192.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 193.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 199-200.

the mass of the people",<sup>1</sup> wherever they were far from them. The workers contested every elective office with the bourgeoisie and a situation developed where "the bourgeoisie and the government came to be much more afraid of the legal than of the illegal action of the workers' party, of the results of elections than of those of rebellion".<sup>2</sup>

Even then and in the years to come, Right-wing opportunists interpreted Engels' words as meaning he had renounced the need for armed struggle and was now in favour of peaceful revolution. What Engels referred to, however, was a different matter. His change of attitude to the importance of barricade tactics was meant to warn the proletariat against taking futile action that could lead to unnecessary bloodshed and not to sacrifice the "shock force in vanguard skirmishes, but to keep it intact until the decisive day".<sup>3</sup> These appeals for more widely applying the legal possibilities of bourgeois parliamentarism so as to establish contact with the working people had the objective of preparing the people for the future "great revolution"<sup>4</sup> and for establishing proletarian dictatorship.

Engels wrote that the German bourgeoisie demanded that German socialists observe the letter of the law and renounce revolutionary violence under any circumstances. This disquiet on the part of the German bourgeoisie was attributable to the developing German labour movement after the Exceptional Law against the socialists had been revoked in 1890. At that time, the Social-Democratic Party had over 100,000 members and enjoyed immense popularity among the working class. Engels said that "it is much more likely that the bourgeoisie and its government will infringe upon this law so as to crush us by force. We shall live and learn. For the time being, 'shoot first, gentlemen of the bourgeoisie!'"<sup>5</sup> Engels later wrote that it would not be long before the German bourgeoisie tired of passively watching the mounting socialist movement and would be first to resort to illegitimate

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 196.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 201.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 199.

<sup>5</sup> Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 22, Berlin, 1963, S. 251.



means and violent action against the working class. His phrase, "*shoot first, gentlemen of the bourgeoisie!*" meant that within the bounds of the bourgeois system the responsibility for using force would be that of the ruling classes.

Marx and Engels, therefore, granted that the proletariat in some countries might take state power peacefully. What policy in this event should the working class pursue? The experience of the Paris Commune indicated that it simply had to expropriate the big capitalists and landowners. But what form should this expropriation take—with or without compensation? Engels wrote: "We by no means consider compensation as impermissible in any event; Marx told me (and how many times!) that in his opinion we would get off cheapest if we could buy out the whole lot of them."<sup>1</sup>

Lenin wrote on this issue that Marx and Engels had emphasised the importance of maintaining the forces of production so as to facilitate the transition to socialism where it will "compel the capitalists to submit peacefully and to come over to socialism in a cultured and organised fashion, provided they were paid well".<sup>2</sup> Lenin elaborated on this idea in regard to the imperialist stage of capitalist development; the concession made by Marx over the proletariat seizing power peacefully in such states as the USA and Britain lost all significance in the new situation, insofar as "an unprecedented growth in . . . bureaucratic and military apparatus" had taken place in those countries.<sup>3</sup>

In his work "The Historical Destiny of the Doctrine of Karl Marx", Lenin wrote that "the 'peaceful' period of 1872-1904 has passed, never to return. The high cost of living and the tyranny of the trusts are leading to an unprecedented sharpening of the economic struggle, which has set into movement even the British workers who have been most corrupted by liberalism. We see a political crisis brewing even in the most 'diehard', bourgeois-Junker country, Germany. The frenzied arming and the policy of imperialism are turning modern Europe into a 'social peace' which is

<sup>1</sup> K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* (in three volumes), Vol. 3, p. 474.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 339.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 25, p. 410.

more like a gunpowder barrel."<sup>1</sup> It would be wrong to think, however, that Lenin took the view that only armed struggle was possible.

As a true revolutionary Marxist, Lenin was dialectically flexible in dealing with the choice of paths and forms of revolutionary struggle, depending on the specific political and overall historical situation.

In his work "A Retrograde Trend in Russian Social-Democracy", written in 1899, Lenin took up the cudgels with the editors of the Russian magazine *Rabochaya Mysl* saying: "... the editors of *Rabochaya Mysl* include in working-class socialism only that which is to be obtained along the *peaceful* path and exclude the revolutionary path. This narrowing-down of socialism and its reduction to common bourgeois liberalism represents again a tremendous step backwards as compared with the views of all Russian Social-Democrats and of the overwhelming majority of European Social-Democrats. The working class would, of course, prefer to take power *peacefully* (we have already stated that this seizure of power can be carried out only by the organised working class which has passed through the school of the class struggle), but to *renounce* the revolutionary seizure of power would be *madness* on the part of the proletariat, both from the theoretical and the practical-political points of view; it would mean nothing but a disgraceful retreat in face of the bourgeoisie and all other propertied classes. It is very probable—even most probable—that the bourgeoisie will not make peaceful concessions to the proletariat and at the decisive moment will resort to violence for the defence of its privileges. In that case, no other way will be left to the proletariat for the achievement of its aim but that of revolution. This is the reason the programme of 'working-class socialism' speaks of the winning of political power in general *without defining* the method, for the choice of method depends on a future which we cannot precisely determine. But, we repeat, to limit the activities of the proletariat under any circumstances to peaceful 'democratisation' alone is arbitrarily to narrow and vulgarise the concept of working-class socialism."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 18, p. 585.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 4, pp. 276-77.



Lenin had not prejudged "the method of taking power" which in his opinion depended on future development. He regarded both forms—peaceful and armed—and their different combinations, as component parts of a single revolutionary process and viewed armed struggle as the more probable.

The theme of the Russian proletariat using armed struggle against tsarism dominates Lenin's work in the revolutionary period 1905-1907, when revolution developed in a situation that gave hope for a successful armed uprising, when the revolutionary mood of the proletariat spread like wildfire. Lenin said that "in the final analysis force alone settles the great problems of political liberty and the class struggle, and it is our business to prepare and organise this force and to employ it actively, not only for defence but also for attack".<sup>1</sup>

In *Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution*, Lenin directly posed the question of the need for armed insurrection in winning revolution. In an argument with the Mensheviks and bourgeois liberals on the strategy and tactics of the revolutionary struggle Lenin wrote: "Would you like an instance provided by the history of the Social-Democratic movement in Russia to explain this difference between vulgar revolutionism and tail-ism in revolutionaries? We shall provide you with such an explanation. Call to mind the years 1901 and 1902, which are so recent, but already seem ancient history to us today. Demonstrations had begun. Vulgar revolutionism had raised a wail about 'assault tactics' . . . 'bloodthirsty leaflets' were being issued . . . and attacks were being made on the 'literary pretentiousness' and armchair nature of the idea of agitation being conducted on a country-wide scale through a newspaper. . . . On the contrary, revolutionaries' tail-ism found expression at the time in the teaching that 'the economic struggle is the best means of political agitation'. How did the revolutionary Social-Democrats behave? They attacked both these trends. They condemned pyrotechnic methods and the cries about assault tactics, for it was, or should have been, obvious to all that open mass action was a matter of the morrow. They condemned tail-ism and openly issued the slogan *even* of a

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 9, p. 30.

popular insurrection, not in the meaning of a direct appeal . . . but in the meaning of a *necessary* deduction, the meaning of 'propaganda' . . . in the sense of preparing those very 'socio-psychological conditions' . . . *At that time* propaganda and agitation . . . were really brought to the fore by the objective state of affairs. *At that time* work on an all-Russia political newspaper, the weekly publication of which seemed an ideal, could be proposed (and was proposed in *What Is To Be Done?*) as the touchstone of the work of preparing for an insurrection. *At that time* slogans advocating mass agitation *instead* of direct armed action, preparation of the socio-psychological conditions for insurrection *instead* of pyrotechnics were revolutionary Social-Democracy's only correct slogans. *At the present time* these slogans have been overtaken by events."<sup>1</sup>

Lenin, thus, showed that the relationship between the different forms or methods of revolutionary struggle changed with the historical situation.

By the end of 1905, the tsarist regime could no longer be taken unawares. During the revolution, it had organised a counter-revolution, ready for military action which was bound to affect the forms of revolutionary struggle. So, for example, the December events in Moscow demonstrated that a general strike as an independent and principal form of revolutionary struggle had exhausted itself and that the labour movement had grown into a higher form of revolutionary struggle—an armed insurrection.

Experience confirmed that the proletarian party needed to learn quickly and decisively to change its methods of fighting depending on the changing balance of power in order to make the revolution successful. It had to show the people the need for selfless and merciless struggle against the tsarist autocracy in any future action. Lenin regarded as short-sighted Plekhanov's view, which had been seized upon by all opportunists, that it was not necessary to take up arms. On the contrary, Lenin said, it was more necessary than ever to take up arms, it was necessary to explain to the people the impossibility simply of a peaceful strike by itself and to demonstrate the need for armed struggle. The

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 9, pp. 70-71.



1905-1907 Russian revolution showed that a decisive victory for revolution over tsarism and the establishment of a revolutionary democratic worker-peasant dictatorship could only be achieved through armed struggle. But the characteristics of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia in February 1917 offered the real possibility for a peaceful development of the bourgeois-democratic into a socialist revolution. Lenin studied this possibility, too, giving great attention to the state of the military bureaucratic machine of the exploiting classes.

The February revolution resolved the issue of power very uniquely; a dual power came into existence—alongside the bourgeois Provisional Government there existed a second government in the form of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Peasants' Deputies, which enjoyed the support of the overwhelming majority of Russian people. The first stage of revolution was accomplished. Lenin then wrote that the important thing was "the conquest of power by the *Soviets of Workers' Deputies*".<sup>1</sup> From the time of the Seventh (April) All-Russia Conference of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (Bolsheviks), the Leninist slogan "All Power to the Soviets" began to express the strategic policy of the Bolsheviks in the peaceful period of revolutionary development.

In the period March to June 1917, the class balance of power in Russia developed in favour of revolution: the Soviets operated everywhere and the bourgeoisie could not resort to open violence, while the Provisional Government held on to power by deceiving the people through a conciliatory policy by the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Menshevik leaders in the Petrograd Soviet. International imperialism was divided into two hostile camps and could not come in time to the aid of the Russian bourgeoisie.

"We must ably, carefully, clear people's minds," Lenin wrote, "and lead the proletariat and poor peasantry forward, away from 'dual power' towards the full power of the Soviets of Workers' Deputies."<sup>2</sup> It was imperative to do radical reshaping of the "entire old state apparatus, that

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 35, p. 298.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 24, pp. 32-33.

bureaucratic apparatus which hampers everything democratic. It means removing this apparatus and substituting for it a new, popular one, i.e., a truly democratic apparatus of Soviets, i.e., the organised and armed majority of the people—the workers, soldiers and peasants."<sup>1</sup>

At that time, the Bolshevik Party sought to use democratic liberties to the maximum, to swing the Soviets to revolutionary positions and consistently to expose the conciliatory attitude of the petty-bourgeois parties, the sell-out of the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik leaders of the Petrograd Soviet to the Provisional Government and to gain a majority in the Soviets.

The great and multifarious organisational and political activity of the Bolsheviks among the people brought just rewards. The slogan "All Power to the Soviets" became increasingly meaningful and pertinent to the mass of working people.

A new, non-peaceful period of the Russian Revolution commenced in July 1917. The temporary success of the bourgeoisie over the proletariat, won on July 3-5, spelt an end to dual power and the transfer of all power to the bourgeoisie. The Central Executive Committee of the Soviets and the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet agreed to disarm the workers and revolutionary regiments that had taken part in the Fourth of July demonstration. The Soviets were thereby deprived of effective power. The "All Power to the Soviets" slogan no longer fitted the new conditions of class struggle and was for the moment abandoned. Lenin wrote in those July days that "objectively it would be deceiving the people; it would be fostering in them the delusion that even *now* it is enough for the Soviets to want to take power, or to pass such a decision, for power to be theirs."<sup>2</sup>

The Sixth Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party directed the party to prepare an armed insurrection and at the same time to resist encroachments on any mass workers' organisations by counter-revolution, i.e., to use every possible form of revolutionary struggle. Lenin

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 25, p. 368.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 185.



wrote: "The party of the working class, without abandoning legal activity, but never for a moment overrating it, must combine legal with illegal work."<sup>1</sup>

The counter-revolutionary attempt to set up a military dictatorship failed; General Kornilov and his supporters at once met the organised resistance of the Soviets. Armed workers who had set up "Red Guard" detachments helped to defeat Kornilov. The attempted *putsch* exposed the bourgeois Constitutional-Democratic Party as the inspiration behind counter-revolution. The petty-bourgeois parties once again swayed towards the proletariat; the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks split and the Bolshevik star was very much in the ascendancy.

In this situation, there again arose briefly the possibility of a peaceful transfer of power to the Soviets. Lenin proposed using that possibility. He wrote: "By seizing full power, the Soviets could still today—and this is probably their last chance—ensure the peaceful development of the revolution, peaceful elections of deputies by the people, and a peaceful struggle of parties inside the Soviets; they could test the programmes of the various parties in practice and power could pass peacefully from one party to another."<sup>2</sup> There could be no question of any resistance to the Soviets, Lenin wrote, as long as they did not vacillate. "No class will dare start an uprising against the Soviets, and the landowners and capitalists... will give up their power peacefully and yield to the ultimatum of the Soviets."<sup>3</sup> Lenin warned that if that possibility were to be missed, the fiercest civil war between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat would be inevitable. "The proletariat will not hesitate to make every sacrifice to save the revolution.... On the other hand, the proletariat would support the Soviets in every way if they were to make use of their last chance to secure a peaceful development of the revolution."<sup>4</sup>

The Bolsheviks attentively followed the vacillations amidst the petty-bourgeois democrats, tried to utilise the split in the ranks of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Men-

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 178.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 26, pp. 67-68.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 68.

sheviks for power to be transferred peacefully to the Soviets. They even suggested a compromise with the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, agreeing to return to their proposal of the pre-July period that a government of Soviets be formed by the Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary parties. The Bolsheviks made only two conditions: that the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries should make a complete and utter break with the Constitutional Democrats, and that the Bolsheviks should retain freedom of propaganda.

The two parties rejected the compromise and, instead, made a pact with the Constitutional Democrats. The last chance for a peaceful revolution went by. Lenin wrote: "The Soviets... missed another opportunity to take all power peacefully when the Kornilov revolt was being liquidated."<sup>1</sup>

The Bolshevisation of the Soviets took place in September and October 1917. Expressing the mood of the revolutionary people, the Bolsheviks reissued the slogan "All Power to the Soviets" which, in effect, meant an appeal for an armed uprising and the establishment of a proletarian dictatorship.

Thus, Lenin and the Bolsheviks showed how their flexible and well-founded policy could take account of the slightest shifts in the class balance of power by proclaiming the "All Power to the Soviets" slogan during the peaceful period of revolution, replacing it by a call to prepare an armed uprising in July and, finally, reestablishing the slogan on a new basis in September 1917. L. I. Brezhnev has said: "Lenin knew how to put forward the most effective mass slogan in the given situation and chart the surest way to the objective."<sup>2</sup>

Lenin did not overrate the possibility of a peaceful revolution. He considered it an exception to the general rule, "extremely rare and difficult" in imperialist conditions.<sup>3</sup> But the working class, he emphasised, must try to use any such opportunity if "there is even one chance in a hundred".<sup>4</sup> L. I. Brezhnev again: "Events took a turn that sent the Rus-

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 25, p. 314.

<sup>2</sup> L. I. Brezhnev, *Following Lenin's Course*, p. 14.

<sup>3</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 36.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 25, p. 307.



sian revolution along a different, non-peaceful way. But the very fact that he posed the question of a possibility, in principle, of the revolution developing along one of two ways is in itself an achievement of Lenin's thinking which is meaningful to this very day."<sup>1</sup>

Relying on the experience of the Great October Socialist Revolution and that of proletarian struggle in other countries, the Communist International in the early 1920's guided the international revolutionary movement towards armed struggle as the main way to establish proletarian dictatorship.

The Communist International did not preclude the possibility of a peaceful socialist revolution; it even studied the question of how to approach it. The decisions of the Seventh Comintern Congress in 1935 are particularly worthy of note in that they called on communist parties to form a bloc of anti-fascist democratic forces and the Popular Front governments, which could become an agency of the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasants, i.e., governments of a transitional stage creating conditions for the bourgeois-democratic revolution to grow into a socialist revolution. In those countries where bourgeois-democratic revolutions occurred a long time ago, Popular Front governments with communist participation could easily become a stage on the way to socialist revolution.

The experience of the national fronts in France and Spain showed that this path of development leading to socialist revolution was both theoretically and practically feasible.

The founders of scientific communism had shown that whatever path of revolutionary struggle the working class and its party chose depending on the specific circumstances—a peaceful or a non-peaceful path—the essence of socialist revolution would not alter. The distinction between a peaceful and non-peaceful path to socialism is not between evolution and revolution, but between two forms of revolution. The peaceful path is not a renunciation of revolution, not reformism, just as reformism is not identical with the concept of the peaceful path to socialism. Even the most peaceful revolution is the supreme stage of the class struggle of

<sup>1</sup> L. I. Brezhnev, *Following Lenin's Course*, pp. 259-60.

the widest sections of the people. Both paths presuppose the destruction of the military and bureaucratic machinery of the exploiting class and the creation of a new state system reflecting the essence of the new regime, i.e., the power of proletarian dictatorship in one form or another.

The revolutionary force of the majority of people in relation to the exploiters is the common denominator in both cases. When Lenin was chided by liberals, he replied: "You say that millions need not resort to force against thousands? You are mistaken; and your mistake arises from the fact that you do not regard a phenomenon in its process of development. You forget that the new authority does not drop from the skies, but grows up, arises parallel with, and in opposition to, the old authority, in struggle against it. Unless force is used against tyrants armed with the weapons and instruments of power, the people cannot be liberated from tyrants."<sup>1</sup>

What path the revolution takes or what forms of revolutionary struggle will be most expedient depends on the correlation of revolutionary and counter-revolutionary forces rather than on the revolutionaries themselves; it depends on the policy of the exploiting classes, on whether the revolutionaries, the working class and its allies are powerful enough to prevent the bourgeoisie putting up armed resistance and launching civil war.

The question of the proletarian party choosing the way to revolution is a question of the conscious, scientific orientation to a peaceful or non-peaceful form of revolutionary struggle, an orientation primarily determined by the actual balance of power at home and abroad over a long period, and possible fluctuations in that balance of power. This balance of power and understanding of the situation at every given moment of the revolution's development determine a party's choice of a particular form or method of revolutionary struggle—peaceful or non-peaceful, legal or illegal, parliamentary or extra-parliamentary, or a combination of both.

On the whole, as experience has shown, no matter what path a communist party has selected, it must be able to use

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 10, p. 245.



all forms of revolutionary struggle. Within the bounds of the peaceful path, it may be necessary to suppress a particular demonstration or military unit without unleashing civil war. In preparing an armed insurrection and mustering forces, the party may also use such forms of struggle as participation in parliament, legal work in mass organisations, and so on. Both paths presuppose immense work by communist parties among the working people.

## 2. Non-Peaceful Path to Revolution

Experience has shown that when the necessary objective conditions are present, revolutionary violence by way of an open armed action is the most effective means for the working class to take power; this is so when the bourgeoisie deprives the working people of legal methods of struggle and puts up open armed resistance to revolutionary changes, and the bulk of the working class realises the need for armed struggle.

Let us look at some actual historical events. The question of power in the French Revolution of 1871 and the Russian Revolution of October 1917 was resolved by means of armed struggle. In both countries, the revolution had its specific characteristics. In France, where the proletarian revolution began when the reactionaries were weakened and scattered, the proletariat took power with support from the armed force of the revolutionary masses but without bloodshed. On March 18, 1871, power in Paris went to the Central Committee of the National Guard, and then, after elections on March 26, the Paris Commune was set up—the first state form of proletarian dictatorship. The counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie, relying on support from interventionists, later forced the proletariat into civil war and drowned the revolutionary movement of the Paris Communards in blood.

The October 1917 armed insurrection in Russia was a classic example of preparing and implementing armed insurrection; in the course of it, the Russian working class in alliance with the poor peasants overturned bourgeois government, dismantled its state machine and established a proletarian dictatorship. After the revolution, the Leninist party began to build a new society. However, the combined inter-

nal and international counter-revolutionaries foisted civil war and foreign intervention upon the new government. The revolutionary forces of Russia, headed by the Bolshevik Party and with international support from working people in capitalist and colonial states, defended the gains of the revolution in fierce struggle and defeated the counter-revolutionaries and foreign interventionists.

The October armed insurrection demonstrated that socialist revolution is not a conspiracy, not an élitist coup carried out by a group of "energetic revolutionaries", but a popular movement and struggle headed by the working class and led by the communist vanguard. The preparation for insurrection was an example of historic initiative and correct estimation of the balance of class forces and the specific conditions of the time. The Bolshevik Party pursued flexible and different tactics at various stages of the revolution, used peaceful and non-peaceful, legal and illegal forms of struggle and demonstrated an ability to combine them, to move from one form of struggle to another.

Lenin always imagined armed insurrection to be a broad movement and action by the working people, led by a communist vanguard of the working class. He invariably opposed the views of the Blanquists, "Left"-wing adventurists and putsch-advocators who had called for armed uprising without account for the specific objective situation.

As the historical experience of the Bolsheviks shows, the best chance for an armed uprising succeeding exists where the revolutionary party pays sufficient attention to the military organisation of the proletariat and all politically conscious working people long before the insurrection takes place. The Bolsheviks had undergone a useful training in the years of the first Russian Revolution. It was then that they had learned to cope correctly with such problems as the creation of military organisations within the party and armed groups of workers, the illegal delivery of weapons and military training which included the mass training of insurgents in weapon handling and street fighting.

The systematic revolutionary work undertaken by the Bolsheviks in the tsarist army and navy was also vital. It was aimed at augmenting the political army of revolutionaries with soldiers and sailors. At the same time, the Bolsheviks



drew military specialists into the revolutionary army. Soldiers and sailors joined the revolution, as a rule, with their weapons. Lastly, Bolshevik propaganda in the tsarist armed forces was intended to shake the military support of the autocracy, to debilitate its military might and ensure the armed neutrality of those units whose servicemen at first hesitated to join the revolutionary insurgents.

The October 1917 Revolution was won by the proletariat because its militant Bolshevik vanguard directly implemented Lenin's plan for an armed insurrection. The basis of the plan was the Marxist conception of an uprising as a complex military and political art. No uprising can be successful without this art being mastered. Lenin always cautioned that one had to prepare for it with extreme seriousness relying on the working class as the vanguard of revolution capable of leading the masses.

To treat an armed uprising as an art means primarily to remember the advice of Marx and Engels on the nature of action by insurgents and battle tactics. Lenin formulated the major Marxist rules for an armed uprising as follows:

"(1) *Never play with insurrection, but when beginning it realise firmly that you must go all the way.*

(2) Concentrate a *great superiority of forces* at the decisive point and at the decisive moment, otherwise the enemy, who has the advantage of better preparation and organisation, will destroy the insurgents.

(3) Once the insurrection has begun, you must act with the greatest *determination*, and by all means, without fail, take the *offensive*. 'The defensive is the death of every armed rising.'

(4) You must try to take the enemy by surprise and seize the moment when his forces are scattered.

(5) You must strive for *daily successes*, however small (one might say hourly, if it is the case of one town), and at all costs retain '*moral superiority*.'"<sup>1</sup>

In developing these ideas, Lenin taught his followers skillfully to manoeuvre during the operations. In artfully combining their major forces, insurgents should, following Lenin's plan, seize and hold on at any price to the vitally

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 180.

important centres, communications' points and key points of economic importance, isolate the enemy and drive him out of his military support points. The decisive fulfilment of all these tasks demands of insurgents "*art and triple audacity*".<sup>1</sup>

The Marxist-Leninist theory of armed insurrection as a political and military art combined with the experience of the October armed uprising is invaluable to the liberation and revolutionary movement. Undoubtedly, the appearance of new forms of military equipment, including weapons of mass destruction, which the ruling classes of capitalist states possess, vital changes in the nature and structure of their armed forces, may create fresh problems for the working people who take up arms today. The successful actions by revolutionary insurgents on the various continents, however, show that these problems can be overcome. The socialist states are strong enough to proffer all kinds of support to those peoples who rise up against reactionary political regimes; this can prevent, weaken or even thwart the military actions of international counter-revolutionaries.

The development of revolution through armed struggle has its objective laws. The major law is that it is impossible to launch an armed struggle while the objective conditions and a revolutionary situation do not exist. In the absence of these objective conditions, no sacrificial actions by individual groups of revolutionary insurgents and no amount of elaborate tactics of guerrilla warfare can bring victory to the revolution. These actions will not receive mass support and will inevitably result in failure.

Not long before the October uprising, Lenin examined the conditions for the revolutionary uprising to succeed and wrote: "To be successful, insurrection must rely not upon conspiracy and not upon a party, but upon the advanced class. That is the first point. Insurrection must rely upon a *revolutionary upsurge of the people*. That is the second point. Insurrection must rely upon that *turning-point* in the history of the growing revolution when the activity of the advanced ranks of the people is at its height, and when the *vacillations* in the ranks of the enemy and in the ranks of the weak, half-hearted and irresolute friends of the revolution are strong-

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 181.



est. That is the third point. And these three conditions for raising the question of insurrection distinguish *Marxism from Blanquism*.<sup>1</sup>

The founders of Marxism-Leninism in describing the armed seizure of power by the workers always attributed special importance to *preparing* the revolutionary forces for armed action. The armed uprising requires circumspect preparation, mobilisation and organisation of forces capable of successfully using the objective conditions and winning the day. On the basis of the armed uprisings of 1905 and 1917, Lenin showed that insurrection cannot be an individual sally or even armed action by a single party. It must rely on the participation and support of the broadest mass of working people. And these people take part in insurrection only if they have been prepared for it by the course of events and by the whole development of revolution.

The masses may also rise up spontaneously for armed struggle. But if they are scattered and unorganised, the struggle may end in failure. Victory is likely when the revolutionary people are well-organised, united, led by a Marxist-Leninist party and prepared to take up a selfless struggle at the call of that party. The party must maintain constant contact with the broadest mass of all working people if the uprising is to be prepared and carried out properly, if all revolutionary forces are to be well organised, and if the bold assault is to succeed. The conditions for forming a potentially successful political army of revolution include the fight to consolidate the working class, to organise the peasants and other non-proletarian groups, to explain to the people their class tasks and to purge people's minds of reformist illusions.

The maturation of conditions for insurrection and the formation of a political army of revolution is a dynamic process which begins with the gathering of forces and establishment of close contact between the working class and other classes and social groups which are dissatisfied with the existing regime. This contact enables all the forces of revolution collectively to make a correct evaluation of the political situation and to operate in concert. The working peo-

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26 pp. 22-23.

ple become convinced of the need for an uprising as the revolutionary party organises them. The party has to get the working class to understand not only the political significance, but the practical and organisational problems of the impending armed uprising. The working class must be ready to put up a valiant fight and its slogan must be vigorous attack, not defence. Therein lies the political training of the people for insurrection.

Then comes direct preparation. The masses are organised for insurrection while their revolutionary nucleus—the advanced workingmen, peasants, intellectuals and white-collar workers—is being armed. One of the major conditions for preparing an uprising is political work by revolutionaries among servicemen and winning them (or part of them) over to revolution. The vanguard of the working class has to make the correct decision on the opportune moment for insurrection. Its beginning is timed for the period when the activity of the advanced detachments of working people is at its greatest and when vacillations in the ranks of the enemy are at their worst (complete moral and political collapse of the old government). Under these circumstances, the people are close to insurrection, and the party shows them the way forward.

The preparation for and seizure of power through armed uprising demands that the party take comprehensive and practical action, carry on underground work while simultaneously using legal possibilities, train military specialists and secure sources for obtaining weapons. Only a revolutionary party that takes into account the specific conditions of its country can resolve all these tasks.

An armed uprising does not bring victory in any circumstances. It will not be successful if the revolutionary party does not enjoy a majority among the advanced sections of revolutionary classes or the sympathy of most of the people, if the developing revolution has not dissipated the conciliatory illusions among the petty bourgeoisie, if such slogans as "Land to the Peasants" and "Establishment of Peace and Independence" have not attained great popularity, if the class-conscious workers are unsure of support from the peasant movement, if the economic and political situation in the country does not inspire hope for the successful out-



come of insurrection. That is why Marxists criticise "Left"-wing elements who underestimate the importance of action to create a united democratic front, legal forms of struggle and work among the people for the decisive battle for power.

It would appear that revolution will be non-peaceful in countries where there are at present no bourgeois-democratic liberties and little possibility of a peaceful political struggle.

To say that armed struggle is necessary does not mean renouncing peaceful forms of revolutionary struggle. Communist parties that are set for armed struggle nonetheless pursue a flexible policy in regard to specific forms of struggle, depending on the domestic and foreign situation.

The Secretary of the Communist Party of Salvador, Cayetano Carpio, speaking at the International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties in 1969, said: "It should be perfectly clear that in the conditions created by the enemies of our independent development, our people can assume power only by armed struggle closely linked with other forms of political struggle. The Communist Party of Salvador is exerting every effort to lead the masses, it directs their fight for immediate demands and prepares them for the decisive battle for liberation."<sup>1</sup>

The Venezuelan Communist Party advocates various forms of struggle against the exploiters. An armed struggle began there in 1961. The guerrillas were made up, usually, of students, petty-bourgeois elements and émigrés, while the peasants and workers comprised only a very small percentage and the guerrillas had little support from the local population. In several cases, the peasants themselves took part in punitive actions against the guerrillas. The struggle lasted five years and, despite immense heroism and sacrifice, the Venezuelan guerrilla movement, due to lack of mass support, failed to make any headway and was defeated. The Eighth Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee of the Venezuelan Communist Party which was held in 1967 took stock of the results of this struggle and decided to

<sup>1</sup> *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow 1969*, p. 138.

change the party's tactics so as to do more work among the working people, while stressing that the decisions taken at the Party's Third Congress concerning the non-peaceful nature of the path to national liberation and socialism still basically held good. The General Secretary of the Party, Jesus Faria, said: "Today the CPV is fighting to regain lost positions and reorganise on a national scale. We are concentrating on the task of winning more members among the working class, on the Marxist-Leninist training of our comrades, on the application of the principles of proletarian internationalism, on the class struggle."<sup>1</sup>

While advocating armed struggle some Latin American communist parties take a creative approach to working out their tactics. They envisage using peaceful and non-peaceful, legal and illegal forms of revolutionary struggle, the transfer from one to another form of struggle in the specific conditions of their respective countries.

"Left"-wing revisionists who try artificially to whip up a revolutionary situation employ completely different tactics. These include the notion of "several Vietnams", by which they mean that in the event of successful action in artificially fanning a revolutionary struggle, international imperialism—or, to be more precise, US imperialism—will exhaust itself, lose face and be universally condemned; this would lead ultimately, they claim, to a rapid development of the world revolutionary process and would bring nearer the victory of the world socialist revolution. Such advocates of "several Vietnams" who are propounding their views and trying to put them into practice in various parts of the world are extremists divorced from the mass of working people.

In their theory and practice, the "Left"-wing revisionists utterly ignore the question of whether a revolutionary situation is present or not in the country where they propose to provoke a popular armed uprising. The lessons of history show that if a revolutionary situation is lacking, attempts to bring the people to an armed struggle will have dire results. The disaster that befell the Indonesian Communist

<sup>1</sup> *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow 1969*, p. 60.



Party after the events of September 30, 1965, was so great that Indonesian Communists have still not recovered completely. They have had to begin afresh in a more difficult situation than before. "Left"-wing revisionists in Indonesia continue still to undermine the revolutionary forces. They try to hoist upon the Indonesian communist movement slogans of "immediate popular armed struggle" and "surround the towns by the villages", and again would launch the movement on a disaster-course which would isolate several communist parties of South-East Asia from the people and deprive them of any prospect of revolutionary development.

In the document "Urgent Tasks of the Communist Movement in Indonesia", published by the Marxist-Leninist group of the Communist Party of Indonesia, it states: "The Marxists-Leninists of Indonesia hold that it would be premature to launch armed action before the completion of painstaking revolutionary work of a preparatory nature, before the emergence of a clear-cut revolutionary crisis, that would bring about a revolutionary situation, before the formation of an organised and highly influential Marxist-Leninist party as the nucleus capable of heading the armed struggle and ensuring it with the mass support of the forces allied to the working class. This is an indispensable condition of the success of revolutionary action. Without this condition such action would be an adventure objectively playing into the hands of the counter-revolution."<sup>1</sup>

Marx renounced the futility of the conspiratory tactics of Wilhelm Weitling, Karl Heinzen and others who had maintained that revolution could be drummed up at any moment at the wish of a handful of conspirators. In response to the pretentious proclamations of Heinzen calling for immediate uprising, Marx and Engels said that such senseless and tub-thumping propaganda would only harm the interests of democracy. "We ask: Is it not ridiculous to raise a hue and cry with these appeals for revolution that run counter to all common sense, without a knowledge and consideration for the real relations?"<sup>2</sup> In condemning attempts to force a revolution in Germany in 1848 through

<sup>1</sup> *Information Bulletin* No. 9, Toronto, 1968, p. 28.

<sup>2</sup> Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 4, S. 312.

the despatch of a foreign legion of revolutionaries from Paris, Engels wrote: "We opposed this playing at revolution in the most forceful manner. To make an incursion into Germany at the height of the troubles existing there so as to force a revolution on it from outside, would mean undermining the revolutionary cause in Germany itself and bolstering the government, while sacrificing these legionaries to the German troops."<sup>1</sup>

Marxism-Leninism teaches and practice confirms that the ways and means of armed socialist revolution can be extremely diverse. In some cases, it will be an armed insurrection in town or country, in others—a guerrilla war, in yet others—an armed struggle against foreign intervention or civil war.

While comprehensively examining the question of armed socialist revolution and of establishing proletarian dictatorship, Marxists-Leninists make no absolute conclusions in this respect. They oppose the dogmatists who advocate artificially accelerating world revolution.

### 3. Gaining Power Peacefully

History has witnessed examples of the peaceful development of socialist revolution, such as the frequent attempts of the Bolshevik Party between February and October 1917 to use the favourable situation for peacefully changing the bourgeois-democratic to socialist revolution and establishing a proletarian dictatorship. But, the counter-revolutionary actions of the Russian bourgeoisie and the conciliatory and anti-revolutionary posture of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries forced the people and the Bolshevik Party to replace peaceful by armed struggle; proletarian dictatorship was therefore attained through an uprising and strengthened during the subsequent civil war against foreign intervention and the fight against the foreign invaders.

The possibility of a peaceful transition to socialism arose in Finland in 1917 where the people had extensive democratic liberties. The Finnish bourgeoisie eliminated this possibility by provoking a bloody civil war.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Bd. 12, S. 218.



A peaceful transition to power occurred in Hungary in 1919. The previous year, a bourgeois-democratic revolution had toppled the Hungarian monarchy and brought to power the liberal bourgeoisie backed by social democrats. A coalition government which protected the interests of the big bourgeoisie and landowners and dealt viciously with the labour and peasant movement, refused to recognise the right to independence of national minorities. The government counted on help from the Entente powers in maintaining the bourgeois system in the country. Its home and foreign policy received no popular support, however, and it became bankrupt. The working class took the initiative and demanded a socialist republic; the mass of peasants and urban petty bourgeoisie followed the lead of the working class. Communist influence spread rapidly among the working people, and the social democrats, threatened with losing contact completely with the people, were obliged to unite with the Communists. The people had weapons and were ready for armed struggle; there were no forces in the country which could oppose the working class and its allies. The preponderance of the revolutionaries was so obvious that the bourgeoisie decided not to put up a fight.

Lenin said that "... Hungary was an example of a revolution born in a different way".<sup>1</sup> Elsewhere, he wrote: "In Hungary the transition to the Soviet system, to the dictatorship of the proletariat, has been incomparably easier and more peaceful."<sup>2</sup> He stressed that "in a country where the bourgeoisie will not offer such furious resistance, the tasks of the Soviet government will be easier; it will be able to operate without the violence, without the bloodshed that was forced upon us by the Kerenskys and the imperialists".<sup>3</sup> A dictatorship of the proletariat was set up in Hungary and it was only the combined efforts of the European bourgeoisie which had declared war on revolutionary Hungary that brought down this dictatorship after 133 days.

Another example of peaceful socialist revolution was the development of democratic into socialist revolution in parts

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 270.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 387.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 270-71.

of Eastern Europe in the three years after the last war. This process had its own peculiarities: in all or virtually all cases, the peaceful development was preceded by a fierce armed struggle during the popular democratic revolution (a Resistance movement and a liberation struggle against fascism). At that stage, the military and bureaucratic machine associated with the fascist occupation authorities was smashed and the political prestige of the most reactionary elements in the ruling classes declined while that of the proletariat and communist parties rose.

In the course of this process, the communist parties applied the Marxist-Leninist thesis of the need for using various forms of revolutionary struggle. One feature of this development was that the popular revolutionary actions from below were combined with energetic activity by proletarian parties from above, utilising the state organs in which Communists had gained a firm foothold.

In striving to ensure the victory of socialist revolution, communist parties primarily relied on developing popular initiative and independence from below. They put forward revolutionary slogans, educated and mobilised the people to implement their demands in a revolutionary fashion, organised meetings, strikes and peaceful demonstrations and, where necessary, used force. The working class therefore moved revolution on from below. Simultaneously, the parties used the participation of their representatives in parliament, in local and central government, organising, politically educating, arming and inspiring the people to a revolutionary struggle in order to suppress the counter-revolutionaries. The working class thereby moved revolution on from above.

This, for example, is how events developed in Hungary. The reactionary bourgeois and landowning circles whose aim was to destroy the republic and re-establish a fascist regime, relying on assistance from international imperialism, were preparing a counter-revolutionary coup. The conspiracy was uncovered in December 1946 and the reactionaries expelled from leading government posts. The composition of parliament no longer corresponded to the new balance of power in the country. In alliance with other progressive mass organisations, the Communist Party demanded im-



mediate parliamentary elections. The outcome of these elections of August 1947 indicated that a majority of the nation was in favour of the country's development towards socialism. A Left-wing bloc won the elections. Its parties received 60.8 per cent of the vote, with the Communist Party being the major force within this bloc. In accordance with the will of the people, the Communists gained strong positions in the newly formed government.

The peaceful revolution in Czechoslovakia is also of interest. By the beginning of 1948, a very strained situation had developed in Czechoslovakia; the reactionary bourgeoisie in cahoots with the Right-wing leaders of the social democrats was preparing a coup in order to bring down the National Front, remove Communists from the government, deal mercilessly with democratic elements, put an end to the revolutionary gains of the people and re-establish a bourgeois-democratic regime. The conspirators had the extensive support of international imperialism. In February 1948, 12 reactionary ministers resigned in the belief that the President who sympathised with them would take the opportunity of forming a new government without Communists. The Communist Party then called upon the people to defend the people's democracy. Under communist leadership, the working class formed detachments for self-defence and a workers' militia which was to guard factories, mills and government institutions. Thousands of working people in Prague, including armed self-defence detachments, came to meetings and demanded that the resignations should be accepted and that genuine democrats should be brought into the government. Simultaneously, mass demonstrations in support of the people's democracy took place all over Czechoslovakia. Faced with this situation, the reactionary ministers were obliged to step down and the government was reinforced with representatives of the workers and peasants.

Experience of the peaceful development of a popular-democratic into a socialist revolution has confirmed that the victory of socialist revolution can only be sound if the old bourgeois government apparatus is destroyed and replaced by a new government machinery expressing the will of the working class. Unless this is done, and unless it is done

consistently, the local bourgeoisie which has retained its power will exploit the situation, supported by international imperialism, to re-establish the old capitalist order. That, for example, is exactly how the Hungarian bourgeoisie acted in October 1956. First Secretary of the CC of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, Janos Kadar, has said: "The victory of socialist revolution in a relatively peaceful way gave the *Hungarian bourgeoisie* the advantage that, although the economic basis of its power had been eliminated through expropriation, it *nonetheless maintained its personnel to a large extent and played an active political role*. Moreover, due to the special nature of our development *we had not dismantled the bourgeois governmental apparatus, apart from the gendarmerie and the army immediately after 1945*; we had only altered it gradually. Thus, for a long time, the bourgeoisie was able to retain its considerable influence over state administration and over the tackling of economic and cultural problems.

That is why it took only a few days, after October 23, 1956, for the bourgeoisie to organise itself again in quite an effective way and act as an active political force."<sup>1</sup>

The experience of Chile is also of theoretical and practical interest. The socialist and communist parties of Chile which headed the Popular Unity bloc established in late 1969, favoured and still favour the peaceful path of revolution and non-armed forms of struggle. These parties have taken the line that it is possible gradually to accumulate power, win sympathy and unite all the Left-wing forces on a single platform of opposition to imperialism and local oligarchy. The programme of the Popular Unity bloc envisaged a number of revolutionary democratic changes that include the nationalisation of the major natural resources, private banks and insurance companies, foreign trade and large commercial companies, the major industrial monopolies, an agrarian reform, several social and cultural measures, and the transition in the future to socialist changes.

<sup>1</sup> J. Kadar, *Izbranniye statyi i rechi (1957-1960)*, Moscow, Gospolitizdat, 1960, p. 52 (in Russian).



The Popular Unity government that came to power peacefully had a clear understanding of the difficulties that lay ahead. It had to deal with resistance to its revolutionary measures by reactionaries in the country and international imperialists, the various conspiracies organised by the latter and their attempts to overthrow the government by terror, provocation and sabotage.

Although the government of the Popular Unity acted strictly within the limits of bourgeois legality, resulting from the democratic traditions of the nation, the reactionary forces, having seen that they had no hopes of returning to power by constitutional ways, counted on a military coup d'état. On September 11, 1973 the reactionary militarists, inspired by imperialist circles and local reaction, carried out a coup d'état. The freely expressed will of the people was trampled. Salvador Allende, the legally elected President of the Republic and Commander-in-Chief of its armed forces, was killed; thousands of patriots and democrats were shot; tens of thousands were thrown into prisons and concentration camps; parliament, the municipalities, and political parties were dissolved; the constitution was abrogated, and democratic freedoms were liquidated. An anti-popular terroristic dictatorship of a fascist type, expressing the interests of monopoly capital, was established in the country, and civil freedoms were abolished. The military-fascist dictatorship aims at liquidating not only progressive social reforms brought about by the government of the Popular Unity, but all democratic rights won by the people in stubborn struggle during the one-and-a-half century of the existence of the Chilean state.

In the appeal "To the People of Chile", the Communist Party of Chile, condemning the crimes of the Chilean fascists, gives also an analysis of these acts and their meaning. "Of course," says the appeal, "the nearly three years of Popular Unity government must also be subjected to a critical and self-critical analysis. Important reforms were effected in this time, but serious mistakes too were committed. Grave damage was caused by the activities of the "Leftist" elements and reformist tendencies, which at times made themselves felt in the work of the Popular Unity government."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *New Times* No. 44, 1973, p. 31.

V. Teitelboim, a member of the Political Commission of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Chile, emphasises that the question is not one of a simple military coup d'état but of a reactionary coup d'état practising the worst methods of fascism with the aim of establishing not only a reactionary dictatorship, but precisely a fascist tyranny of the nature of the dictatorial regimes of Mussolini, Hitler, Franco, the Indonesian executioners, and the Greek colonels.

The junta not only trampled the elementary norms of bourgeois democracy, but tried also to assert fascism as a permanent system, supported by the repressive hierarchical state, in order to halt the free development of Chile for dozens of years. "In these ways," emphasised V. Teitelboim, "Chile became an 'experimental ground' where the most cruel and foul methods of imperialism, resorting to fascist methods, to terror, killing, persecution, and torture, are tested...."

"In Chile an end came to the myth spread by the imperialist press and persistently cultivated by world reaction, which loves to present itself as the zealous saviour of order and legality, the supporter of freedom, democracy, and the rights of man. In Chile reaction appeared in its most naked form. With terrible clarity imperialism showed that it carries with itself death to freedom, democracy, and the rights of man."<sup>1</sup>

It is important to understand why Chile, namely, became such an "experimental ground" for the methods of world imperialist reaction and for that coup d'état planned to the minutest detail and organised by reaction's special centres.

The presidential elections in March of 1973 showed that the number of people voting for the programme of the Popular Unity rose from 36.3 per cent to 44 per cent; that the majority of the nation was already inclined to its side; that inevitable defeat awaited internal reaction and imperialist forces in the future; and that the progressive changes would acquire an irreversible character.

The final victory of the Chilean revolution would mean not only the defeat of internal reaction, but also a power-

<sup>1</sup> V. Teitelboim, "The People Unsubdued", *Latin America* No. 6, 1973, p. 162.



ful, irreparable attack upon imperialism of the whole continent, which is correctly referred to as "burning".

That is why imperialism resorted to extreme measures, did everything possible, lowering itself to an orgy of assassination and unrestrained violence.

Imperialism committed bloody outrages on a huge scale against the people of Chile not only because they had high political maturity and were devoted to the ideals of democracy and socialism, but also because they had already in practice experienced freedom and independence, inflicting an array of tangible defeats upon imperialist monopoly.

However, imperialism is not able to tear all of this from the heart, consciousness, and feelings of the masses; therefore, in actuality, it took the path of physical destruction of all the people, beginning with the complete liquidation of their progressive forces.

Therefore, world-wide solidarity with the people of Chile is growing and widening fast, as happened relative to the people of Vietnam. Comprehensive help from progressive humanity to the just struggle of the people of Chile inspires them, increases their strength, and is a guarantee of their final victory over the forces of fascism and imperialism.

The defeat of the military junta is inevitable because it is supported only by bayonets. All the nation is arising against the junta.

As is well known, a part of the democratic forces, representing the middle strata, did not accept the programme of the Popular Unity; moreover, the leaders of the Christian-Democratic Party actively came out against that programme, thereby splitting the democratic forces in face of the fascist threat, and finally falling into a trap they made themselves. The democratic forces which followed these leaders also fell victim to the fascist dictatorship. The Christian-Democratic Party did not avoid this tragedy: all its Left elements were arrested together with the supporters of the Popular Unity. This tragic lesson shows, however, that the vacillating middle strata have no other choice but to struggle together with the supporters of the Popular Unity for freedom, democracy, and a socialist future.

The nation-wide resistance to the junta is growing, is

moving to new, higher forms, and is becoming more and more organised and comprehensive. More and more people are brought into it, including those which were far from the Popular Unity.

To regain the lost democratic freedoms the majority of the nation will eventually come together and carry out deeper social transformations and reforms than were achieved by the government of Allende, in order to ensure the effective defence of the achievements of the people.

The unity of the majority of the nation will ensure that decisive union of the workers with the middle strata which was not achieved previously; it will ensure the dominance of democratic forces in the state apparatus and in the army, which was not achieved by the government of the Popular Unity.

The revolutionary process in Chile did not become all-embracing because the question of power was not completely solved—this was the Achilles' heel of the Popular Unity. The presence of permanent opposition to revolutionary executive power from the reactionary part of the legislative and judicial organs, and illusions that the army can stand apart from politics, allowed reaction to gain time, to win over to their side the higher echelons of the military with reactionary tendencies, and to suppress all supporters of constitutional methods in the army.

Events in Chile showed that one should not allow the transformation of the army into a counter-revolutionary force nor its isolation from the revolutionary people, and that the progressive elements in the army must be a part of the revolutionary people and must defend its achievements. However, in order to achieve this much work by revolutionary forces among the soldiers, sailors, and officers is necessary. That was not done.

As V. Teitelboim emphasised, under the present conditions "the problem of the position of the army, the question of its role in the revolutionary process, and work in the army is problem number one, and, in a large measure, the reconstruction of freedom and democracy in Chile depends on its solution".<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> V. Teitelboim, "The People Unsubdued", *Latin America* No. 6, 1973, p. 167.



In the appeal "To the People of Chile" it was emphasised that when the people return to power they will not be required to reconstruct all the previous institutions. The people will adopt a new constitution, work out new codes and laws, publish new decrees, establish new state organs and institutions, and create a legal state of a higher type than that which was suppressed as a result of the military coup d'état. After what has taken place the people of Chile have the right to set as their goal the creation of armed forces and police of a new type or, at least, to expell the fascist elements from the army, police, and investigative organs in order to prevent a repetition of the tragedy which the people of Chile are living through in the present time.<sup>1</sup>

Analysing the experience of the development of the Chilean revolution, V. Teitelboim noted that in the dramatic situation existing in Chile it is impossible not to recall Lenin's instructions in his "State and Revolution" concerning the class character of the state machine and all institutions called into being by class antagonism, and the fact that the people are the legal spokesmen of democracy and must establish complete control over the whole state.

Bourgeois ideologues, opportunists, and Right- and "Left"-wing revisionists, speculating on the defeat of the government of the Popular Unity, are in a hurry to cross out the experience of the Chilean revolution, to revise Marxist-Leninist teachings, and to sow discord among revolutionary forces. In these conditions deep analysis of the lessons of the Chilean revolution and of its victories and defeats, and further work on such questions as the forms of revolutionary struggle and the defence of revolutionary achievements, have special significance.

In his speech at a general meeting in Havana on January 29, 1974 L. I. Brezhnev emphasised: "None of the lessons of the past are in vain. And, in particular, the experiences of the coming to power of the Chilean Popular Unity Party will, undoubtedly, be used by fighters for freedom and national independence."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *Kommunist* No. 15, 1973, pp. 94-95.

<sup>2</sup> *Pravda*, January 31, 1974.

An analysis of historical examples when socialist and anti-imperialist revolutions have not required an armed uprising for victory would indicate that in every case it is necessary to determine the factors that made such a path possible, particularly to understand the correlation of class forces and the degree of unity of the working class and its allies.

The programme documents of a number of communist parties and of the world communist movement note the increasing possibility of a peaceful development of revolution today. This conclusion, which has immense practical and theoretical significance, reflects the changes in the overall balance of power which have taken place in the past few decades with the victory of socialism and the successes of the labour and national liberation movement. In other words, the developing opportunities for a peaceful revolution reflect the successes of the world revolutionary process.

British Communists believe that a socialist revolution could be accomplished in Britain by peaceful means. This is possible due to such favourable factors as the highly organised labour movement and the well-entrenched democratic traditions. Decisive progress along the path to socialism will, in their opinion, be ensured to the extent that the workers will develop widely their struggle for improved living conditions, full employment, extensive democracy and a genuine peace policy. British Communists orient the working class and its allies to take political power by gaining a majority in parliament which would then legislate for radical social reforms and turn parliament into an effective weapon of the popular will. It could then use legislation to make a gradual transition to socialism with a strong popular movement existing outside parliament which would continually put pressure on the opponents of radical reforms.

The *British Road to Socialism*, the programme of the Communist Party of Great Britain, states that the working class and its allies must be watchful and ready "to use its organised strength to prevent or defeat attempts at violence against it, its organisations. . . ."

"There will be particular dangers of such resort to force at crucial stages of the struggle, for instance, when a general election is likely to result in a socialist majority; or even



more when a socialist government has been returned and is taking essential measures to break the economic and political power of the monopolies."<sup>1</sup>

American Communists, too, are in favour of a peaceful socialist revolution. The new programme of the Communist Party USA states: "There can be no doubt, therefore, as to the inherently democratic character of socialist revolution. The question remains, however, whether the democratic will of the people can be brought to expression by relatively peaceful means, that is, without armed insurrection, without civil war. Of course, we advocate social change by peaceful means ... within the American Constitutional framework. But the people's democratic will ... and the democratic institutions of our country are not the sole historical factors that will determine the path of social change in the United States. ..."<sup>2</sup>

Historical experience shows that it would be naive to imagine that monopoly capital would not flout the Constitution in using force to countermand the democratic mandate for socialist reforms. No ruling class would renounce power passively and of its own free will. The specific tactics of revolution may, therefore, only be elaborated when a revolutionary situation matures and the ruling class is no longer able to rule by old methods, while the majority of the people will no longer tolerate the existing regime. It is quite clear that this situation does not exist today in the United States, although the working people must naturally be prepared for any turn of events. American Communists give their preference to the peaceful path, although the actions of monopoly reactionaries may not allow them that choice later.

Canadian Communists are in favour of setting up a broad popular coalition and forming an anti-monopoly government on its basis. The party programme adopted at the 21st Party Congress in November 1971 stated:

"The accomplishment of the tasks of the anti-monopoly democratic state will open the possibility of a peaceful tran-

<sup>1</sup> *The British Road to Socialism*. Communist Party Programme, London, October 1968, p. 49.

<sup>2</sup> *New Program of the Communist Party U.S.A.*, New York, 1970, pp. 92, 93.

sition to socialism. It will also make possible the utilisation of Parliament to advance to socialism. The Communist Party sees the possibility of a united working class and its allies achieving the transition without civil war.

"At the same time the Communist Party does not close its eyes to the fact ... that the reactionary forces in capitalist society will not give up their power and privilege peacefully.

"The working class and its allies, when they achieve socialist ... power, will be justified in using the power and the authority of the state to protect the democratic will of the majority against the minority who will strive to restore their lost positions."<sup>1</sup>

Communists see another important aspect of this issue: revolutionary struggle has shown that the stated goal of peaceful revolution actually leads today to a certain growth in prestige and influence of communist parties. Yet, despite all the advantages of this policy, it can only bear fruit if the question of revolution is looked at with account for the balance of power and not in an abstract way. One should not, of course, put one's hopes only on peaceful changes in the development of the revolution of the working class. The revolutionary movement may be harmed by overrating the possibilities of a peaceful revolution.

There are many reasons for the marked trend towards an exaggeration of the possibilities of peaceful revolutionary struggle: first—a one-sided understanding and interpretation of statements concerning the possible paths of revolution formulated at the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party and at the meetings of communist and workers' parties that took place in Moscow in 1957 and 1960; second—a certain absolutising of the experience of peaceful socialist revolutions in some parts of Europe; third—an uncritical judgement of the chances of using peaceful means in certain capitalist states of Western Europe and elsewhere; fourth—an under-rating of the power of resistance of contemporary imperialism to the working-class revolutionary struggle; fifth—an incorrect appreciation of the policy of peaceful coexistence between states with different social systems, as a policy which is

<sup>1</sup> *The Road to Socialism in Canada*, The Program of the Communist Party of Canada, Toronto, 1972, p. 55.



said to encourage revolution only in a peaceful direction.

The 20th CPSU Congress developed the notion that forms of transition to socialism would become increasingly diverse. It is nonetheless not definite that the implementation of these forms in all circumstances will be connected with civil war. The Declaration of the Meeting of Representatives of the Communist and Workers' Parties of the Socialist Countries that took place in Moscow in 1957 stated: "The forms of the transition from capitalism to socialism may vary for different countries. The working class and its vanguard—the Marxist-Leninist party—seek to achieve the socialist revolution by peaceful means. This would accord with the interests of the working class and the entire people, with the national interests of the country. . . . In the event of the exploiting classes resorting to violence against people, the possibility of non-peaceful transition to socialism should be borne in mind. Leninism teaches, and experience confirms, that the ruling classes never relinquish power voluntarily. In this case the degree of bitterness and the forms of the class struggle will depend not so much on the proletariat as on the resistance put up by the reactionary circles to the will of the overwhelming majority of the people, on these circles using force at one or another stage of the struggle for socialism."<sup>1</sup> The 1960 Declaration reaffirmed these notions.<sup>2</sup>

The materials of the 20th Party Congress and of the international communist meetings speak of the use of all possible paths of revolution and forms of revolutionary struggle, of new tasks and opportunities that arise from contemporary development when the socialist states are increasing their influence on world affairs and the world balance of power is shifting, and of the increasing possibility of a peaceful transition to socialism in some capitalist states. These materials undoubtedly affirm the possibility of extending the application of peaceful paths and forms of transition from capitalism to socialism, but they also stress the inevitability of the struggle becoming more acute, and the change-over to other forms when the exploiters resort to coercive repression

<sup>1</sup> *The Struggle for Peace, Democracy and Socialism*, Moscow, 1963, pp. 18-19.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 78-79.

of the revolutionary forces. The experience of democratic revolutions which peacefully developed into socialist revolutions in some European states is very interesting and instructive. But it would be wrong mechanically to apply this experience to countries which are primarily confronted by the question of whether to use peaceful or non-peaceful means of overthrowing reactionary dictatorships and despotic regimes, of putting an end to tyranny and implementing general democratic changes.

The tendency to exaggerate the possibilities of peaceful path is also associated with a non-critical and one-sided evaluation of the domestic situation in certain parts of Western Europe and elsewhere, an evaluation contained in certain academic and particularly popular publications, as a situation which allegedly presupposes a revolutionary struggle by the working class only in a peaceful fashion. It is hard to agree with that point of view. The developing political situation in the biggest capitalist states of late has testified to the onset of a phase of new fierce class battles and the maturation of prerequisites for Left-wing forces to make serious gains through the most diverse means of struggle against monopoly capital. To give one example, the number of people on strike in 1965 amounted to some 36 million, in 1966—44 million, in 1967—some 47 million, in 1968—almost 57 million, and in 1969—60 million, including 44 million in advanced capitalist states. Big demonstrations by the French proletariat took place in May and June 1968, an unprecedented general strike embraced 20 million working people in Italy in November 1969, the anti-fascist struggle in Spain is gaining ground, a new mood is marked among a large part of the workers and students in Japan, West Germany, Britain and the Scandinavian states, and the social contradictions in the USA are intensifying. Everywhere the bourgeoisie is suffering increasing setbacks at the hands of the workers' movement.

Leonid Brezhnev has said: "Not long ago there were countries in the capitalist world which the bourgeoisie regarded as havens of what they called 'social peace'; there are no longer any such countries today."<sup>1</sup> The social and po-

<sup>1</sup> *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties*, Moscow 1969, p. 149.



litical processes that had been maturing in certain bourgeois states in a latent fashion are today increasingly manifest in various forms in many parts of the capitalist system. Political crises are gripping both the periphery and the main centres of capitalism. These show that revolutionary struggle is mounting in the capitalist world.

The revolutionary struggle of the working class under capitalism indicates that the peaceful road to gaining power may be replaced by armed struggle if the bourgeoisie puts up a fierce resistance. Thus, the peaceful victory of the Popular Front in Spain in 1936 provoked frenzied resistance from the Spanish reactionaries who, backed by fascist Germany and Italy—with the tacit connivance of Britain, France and the USA, launched a civil war which ended in the victory of the reactionaries in what had been the first people's democratic republic in Western Europe.

The tendency to overrate the possibility of peaceful development is also due to underestimating the growing resistance to revolutionary struggle from the imperialists striving to recover lost positions, to undermine the unity of the world communist movement and to split the socialist community. These attempts are accompanied by the arms race, militarisation of the economy, a mounting military and bureaucratic apparatus within capitalist states, and the uniting of capitalist countries into aggressive military and political blocs and groupings. World war is no longer inevitable, yet international imperialism resorts as before to interventions, local wars, and government coups in an attempt to extend the frontiers within which it is still possible, they imagine, to suppress peace-loving peoples without running the risk of sparking off a nuclear war. The Document issued by the International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties in 1969 stated: "Through military-political blocs, military bases in foreign countries, economic pressure and trade blockades imperialism maintains tension in some areas of the world. It provides reactionary organisations with financial and political support and intensifies political oppression. It resorts to armed intervention, savage repression—especially in countries where the struggle acquires the most acute forms and where the revolutionary forces fight arms

in hand—counter-revolutionary conspiracies, reactionary and fascist coups, provocations and blackmail."<sup>1</sup>

The imperialists resort to other measures in areas and countries where the revolutionary struggle becomes too dangerous and where the usual oppressive measures are insufficient or further intensify revolutionary struggle. Personal or junta dictatorships are replaced by various forms of bourgeois democracy, a reactionary majority in parliament is replaced by a "liberal" but just as obedient majority to the financial oligarchy. Imperialism widely uses social demagoguery, bribes and the élite of the working class and other social groups and fans nationalism.

Imperialism is a dangerous and perfidious enemy, and to base the possibility of peaceful development only or mainly by references to the changing world balance of power or to the main trends today would be wrong. Furthermore, peaceful coexistence encourages development of all motive forces of world revolutionary process and the use by communist parties of both peaceful and non-peaceful paths and forms of revolutionary struggle.

The fact that the world socialist system is becoming the leading factor in social development is the dominant feature of our age. The mounting power of the socialist community makes it more difficult to export counter-revolution and this militates in favour of revolutionary processes in certain capitalist states, often in comparatively peaceful forms. The power of socialist example is very important for the revolutionary struggle. Communist parties in capitalist states are able more energetically to instil a socialist awareness in the working people. The peaceful path is distinct from the armed path in that the preponderance of revolutionary forces paralyses the resistance of the exploiting classes and obviates the need for the workers to use an armed uprising or civil war. If uprising is an art, peaceful victory is no less an important and complex art. The main features of a revolution developing peacefully comprise the creation of a decisive superiority of forces, the attraction of the majority of the population to the side of revolution, the consolidation of this majority in the battle against the bourgeoisie and the rejection of

<sup>1</sup> *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow 1969, p. 13.*



reformist notions concerning the revolutionary struggle.

The effective embodiment of the idea of peaceful socialist revolution is extremely complex. One condition is to use to the maximum under capitalism the existing democratic freedoms and to turn them from being an instrument by which the bourgeoisie deceives the people into a means of their political liberation. Parliament may be one such instrument of revolution. But revolution cannot be confined to parliamentary bounds and the electoral struggle. The working class must gain a parliamentary majority through broad popular revolutionary action. Revolution must develop from above and from below.

Experience of revolutionary struggle in developed capitalist states would indicate that the working class has the opportunity to paralyse the most reactionary forces of the bourgeois state, to carry the majority of the people with it and to rely on a certain part of the armed forces. Victory at the elections may serve as the beginning of this process. Under any circumstances, however, the decisive factor of the revolutionary process is the concrete balance of power between the working class and all the working people who oppose the bourgeoisie, on the one hand, and the bourgeoisie and its state machine, on the other.

Rodney Arismendi, First Secretary of the CC of the Communist Party of Uruguay, said that the peaceful path demands a combination of two sets of circumstances:

"(a) The discovery of a path of transition to socialist revolution which would make armed insurrection.

"(b) the inevitable destruction of the bureaucratic and military machine of the bourgeois state which is a precondition for any real popular revolution.

"If one confines the peaceful path only to conditions under point (a)—the holding or non-holding of elections, the gaining of a solid majority in parliament, the formation of a broad democratic front against the monopoly oligarchy, etc.—it will lead, despite its authors' good intentions, to the idea of 'the peaceful growth of socialism into capitalism.'"

When this mistake is made, as it has been in some instances, people depart from the major points adopted at international forums of communist parties and from ideas concerning a peaceful development whose realisation must be linked to the specific historical conditions.

Marxism-Leninism emphasises that it would be naive to wait for a possible peaceful revolution. Imperialism continues to strengthen its military-police and bureaucratic machine, which is its main instrument of domination and resorts to repression of revolutionaries by the most extreme and vicious means. In a situation like this the armed path of revolutionary struggle may become inevitable when the masses become convinced from their own experience that it is the only way proletarian dictatorship can triumph.

It is incorrect to think that only a non-peaceful path was once open to socialism while, nowadays, a possibility has arisen, and it is even very likely, for only a peaceful development to exist, that such development should become universal and permanent. The difference exists only in the correlation between these possibilities: the latter has somewhat increased, but the former cannot disappear as long as imperialism exists. The Document adopted by the International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties in 1969 made that very point: "The Communist and Workers' Parties are conducting their activity in diverse, specific conditions, requiring an appropriate approach to the solution of concrete problems. Each party, guided by the principles of Marxism-Leninism and in keeping with concrete national conditions, fully independently elaborates its own policy, determines the directions, forms and methods of struggle, and, depending on the circumstances, chooses the peaceful or non-peaceful way of transition to socialism, and also the forms and methods of building socialism in its own country."<sup>1</sup>

One should stress, finally, that history has not yet seen an absolutely "pure" peaceful or non-peaceful socialist revolution. In practice, we can only speak about the dominant trend which stands out above other trends. The peaceful and non-peaceful paths of revolution are quite likely to be interlaced; it is possible and often inevitable that they will be combined in various ways. Only "a concrete analysis of a concrete situation", as Lenin used to say, consideration of the sum total of all internal and external factors as they develop, can enable one to determine the overriding tendency in the developing processes of socialist revolution in any one country.

<sup>1</sup> *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow 1969*, p. 37.



## HISTORICAL PLACE OF PROLETARIAN DICTATORSHIP

The question of the dictatorship of the proletariat has a special place among the paramount issues of socialist revolution studied by Lenin. It is a key point of Marxist-Leninist philosophy. Its importance has grown particularly due to the fact that the present age is one of transition from capitalism to socialism through proletarian dictatorship, as much on an international as a national scale.

### 1. Historical Role of Proletarian Dictatorship

One of the vital services of Marx and Engels was that they discovered the proletariat as a social force destined to execute the sentence passed by history on capitalism. Having revealed that the establishment of a proletarian dictatorship was inevitable, they regarded it as a historical phenomenon, as a product of the class struggle and a decisive condition for the transition to a classless society. Their conclusions on the historic mission of the working class and proletarian dictatorship were developed by Lenin who applied them to the new historic circumstances of imperialism and revealed the reasons why the working class had to destroy exploiting society and build communism.

In our day and age, however, when social affairs are replete with irrefutable proof of the revolutionary activity of

the working class which has established socialist regimes in several countries, voices may be heard openly and not so openly criticising Marxism-Leninism and calling into doubt the ability of the working class to fulfil its historic mission. These critics of Marxism say that conditions have greatly changed since the time when Marx, Engels and Lenin wrote about the working class: the age of atomic energy and the scientific and technological revolution has laid its imprint on all groups in the population, including the workers, who in the advanced capitalist states have lost their former belligerent qualities and revolutionary inclinations and have acquired new "peace-loving" desires that accord with mass consumer society.

This is an attempt by bourgeois and revisionist writers to substitute their ideal for the actual, to substitute the problem of the workers' historic mission for that of the fickle psychology of its various groups. Marx and Engels had stressed that "the question is not what this or that proletarian, or even the whole of the proletariat at the moment *considers* as its aim. The question is *what the proletariat is*, and what, consequent on that *being*, it will be compelled to do. Its aim and historical action is irrevocably and obviously demonstrated in its own life situations as well as in the whole organisation of bourgeois society today".<sup>1</sup>

In other words, the historic mission of the working class to implement the transition of society from capitalism to communism was motivated not by some sort of subjective momentary qualities but by its objective status in capitalist society, its place and role in large-scale industrial production.

It was this objective status of the working class in bourgeois society that determined and still determines its historic calling and its actual role. The CPSU Central Committee Report to the 24th Party Congress stated: "The *international working class movement* continues to play, as it has played in the past, the role of time-tested and militant vanguard of the revolutionary forces. The events of the past five-year period in the capitalist world have fully borne out the importance of the working class as the chief and strong-

<sup>1</sup> K. Marx and F. Engels, *The Holy Family or Critique of Critical Criticism*, Moscow, 1956, p. 53.



est opponent of the rule of the monopolies, and as a centre rallying all the anti-monopoly forces."<sup>1</sup>

Lenin analysed the evolution of large-scale industrial production, its prevailing laws, trends and contradictions, and showed how this objective process invariably lent the working class those features which make it the leading and decisive force of communist revolution.

What are these features? Have they lost their importance today, as various types of reformists and revisionists make out?

First of all, the working class is that class in society which in production is directly exploited by the bourgeoisie and, for that reason, acts as the most consistent and irreconcilable opponent of capitalist regimes. While the bourgeois-instigated exploitation of small owners, being entangled in various political, financial and legal webs, may prevent these groups of working people from being aware of the essence of the regimes which oppress them, the bourgeois exploitation of the proletariat is blatant and concentrated. As Lenin wrote, "The worker cannot fail to see that he is oppressed by *capital*, that his struggle has to be waged against the bourgeois *class*. And this struggle, aimed at satisfying his immediate economic needs, at improving his material conditions, inevitably demands that the workers organise, and inevitably becomes a war, not against individuals, but against a *class*, the class which oppresses and crushes the working people not only in the factories, but everywhere."<sup>2</sup>

The working class is not only the most resolute opponent of capitalism, it is a class with a growing social role. With the growth of capitalist production, the proportion of the working class among the population rapidly rises, insofar as the absolute increase in size of the working class and the groups attached to it, being the result of large-scale industrial development, is accompanied by the demise of small-scale production and the numerous social groups associated with it. Moreover, the increase in size and, correspondingly, the proportion of the working class in the population, enhances its economic and social role in rapidly increasing

<sup>1</sup> 24th Congress of the CPSU, pp. 22-23.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 299.

progression. The working class is connected with the most advanced forms of production, due to which its economic and social role is greater than its proportion in the population.

The working class is the decisive social force capable of overthrowing the bourgeoisie. As large-scale industrial production develops, it unites the various sections of the working class and transforms them into a mighty social force capable of overthrowing the exploiters and breaking their resistance. Lenin wrote: "The overthrow of bourgeois rule can be accomplished only by the proletariat, the particular class whose economic conditions of existence prepare it for this task and provide it with the possibility and the power to perform it. While the bourgeoisie break up and disintegrate the peasantry and all the petty-bourgeois groups, they weld together, unite and organise the proletariat."<sup>1</sup>

Another vital point is that the working class is the natural leader of all working people in the struggle for a new life. Capitalism exploits, oppresses and stifles all working people, but only the working class, due to every condition of its existence in capitalist society, learns to wage an independent, decisive and consistent class struggle and, by virtue of this, has the power to become the leader of all working and exploited people. Lenin wrote: "Only the proletariat—by virtue of the economic role it plays in large-scale production—is capable of being the leader of *all* the working and exploited people, whom the bourgeoisie exploit, oppress and crush, often not less but more than they do the proletarians, but who are incapable of waging an *independent* struggle for their emancipation."<sup>2</sup>

Lastly, the working class is the only class that acts as the bearer of the new mode of production. It means that after the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, only the working class can establish the new social system without exploiters or human exploitation and thereby consolidate victory over the bourgeoisie and direct social development towards socialism and communism. Lenin noted that "the assumption that all 'working people' are equally capable of doing this work would

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 25, p. 403.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 403-04.



be an empty phrase, or the illusion of an antediluvian, pre-Marxist socialist; for this ability does not come of itself, but grows historically, and grows *only* out of the material conditions of large-scale capitalist production. This ability, at the beginning of the road from capitalism to socialism, is possessed by the proletariat *alone*.<sup>1</sup>

The experience of the socialist states has confirmed this conclusion: every real step on the way to socialism has everywhere been a result primarily of organising the creative endeavour of the working class which had established a new system to suit its own ideals and had reconstructed social life on the basis of scientific communist principles rather than along the lines of equalising peasant socialism.

In explaining the historic mission of the working class as the builder of communism, Lenin insisted that it could only fulfil its mission if it had carried out a socialist revolution by taking power and establishing its dictatorship. At the same time, he never reduced the historic destiny of the proletariat to the establishment of its dictatorship; he carefully delineated the various sections of social development and the immediate and subsequent tasks of the working class.

To understand correctly, therefore, the importance of proletarian dictatorship, it is important to realise that the historic mission of the working class and the historical role of proletarian dictatorship are not the same thing. The working class fulfils its mission of leading society to communism at various stages of the movement in very different social conditions; one situation is characteristic for the beginning of the journey, when, in capitalist society the forces of socialist revolution are only just gathering; another situation exists as society moves from capitalism to socialism, i.e., when the old exploiting society is being radically changed; quite different circumstances exist under developed socialism and as socialism grows into communism. It is perfectly clear that the working class is bound to consider these changing conditions and immediate tasks, is bound to respond to them with a different organisation and form of revolutionary activity depending on the situation.

Lenin's great contribution to the store of scientific com-

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 421.

munist knowledge was his precise delineation of the various aspects of the workers' historic mission and his analysis of the tasks of the working class at various stages of the struggle for communism. He developed the idea of the hegemony of the working class during the preparation for socialist revolution, the problem of leadership and the proletarian dictatorship during the socialist revolution and as socialism is established and strengthened, and the problems of the leading role of the working class in creating communism.

In other words, the question of the historic role of the proletarian dictatorship is part of a more general question concerning the historic mission and leading role of the working class as a transformer of social life along communist lines. But this is the most important and central part for, without establishing its power, the working class cannot fulfil its historic destiny or ensure that society moves from capitalism to communism.

The essence of this period during which the working class fulfils its historic mission by means of a dictatorship, is the revolutionary change of capitalism to socialism which takes place during an acute class struggle. As Lenin stressed, "the theory of the class struggle, applied by Marx to the question of the state and the socialist revolution, leads as a matter of course to the recognition of the *political rule* of the proletariat, of its dictatorship, i.e., of undivided power directly backed by the armed force of the people."<sup>1</sup> During the transition from capitalism to socialism, the task of the working class is, once it has taken power, to abolish private ownership of the means of production and human exploitation, and create and consolidate the new social relations. It can fulfil this noble mission only by taking account of the fact that at this stage all the forces and traditions of the old world—the bourgeoisie and its henchmen, routine and inertia, petty-bourgeois traditions and habits—are bound to resist and hamper the building of socialism.

Under these circumstances, life itself demands from the working class an organisation of political administration with which it could be sure to put down the resistance of all the forces of the old world, overcome its traditions and ves-

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 25, p. 404.



tiges in the economy and people's minds, and which would guarantee the decisive implementation of the workers' will in reconstructing society in a revolutionary and socialist way. Proletarian leadership inevitably acquires the character of a dictatorship over all those forces that resist socialist change. At that stage, the working class can only progress towards communism by way of proletarian dictatorship; there is no other way and no other group that can break the resistance of the old world. The historic role of proletarian dictatorship, therefore, consists in not only building but reconstructing society in a revolutionary and socialist way so that, in the course of the class struggle conducted on the principle of "who will beat whom", it can ensure the complete victory of the working class, break down the resistance of the exploiters and the bourgeoisie, tear up the roots of capitalism and make it impossible for it to be reborn.

Consequently, the proletarian dictatorship is a natural product of the class struggle between the exploiters and the exploited and, moreover, a weapon of that class struggle and a means for creating the new society. As a matter of necessity, it arises every time that social antagonisms between the working class and all working people, on the one hand, and the exploiters, on the other, reach a culminating point. The proletarian dictatorship is an offspring of the antagonism between the exploiters and the exploited; its historic destiny lies in the need to eliminate human exploitation in order to resolve this antagonism. In remarking on the invariable connection between proletarian dictatorship and the class struggle, Marx wrote that "the class struggle necessarily leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat . . . this dictatorship itself only constitutes the transition to the abolition of all classes and to a classless society".<sup>1</sup>

Thus, the establishment and functioning of proletarian dictatorship implies the realisation of part of the historic mission and leading role of the working class in circumstances of class antagonisms and class struggle. This situation leaves its imprint on the way the working class fulfils its

<sup>1</sup> K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* (in three volumes), Vol. 1, p. 528.

leading role. Its prime function is to create the new society and a higher mode of production; it does so in conditions of its domination and it ensures that that domination stands fast.

## 2. The Need for the Working Class to Consolidate Power

The whole set of economic and political conditions of capitalist society makes it historically necessary and inevitable for the working class to establish power in a country in transition from capitalism to socialism. The social and economic basis for the need for proletarian dictatorship consists in that at a certain stage any further development of the productive forces cannot occur automatically or spontaneously; it requires the abolition of capitalist relations of production and private ownership in general—i.e., implementation of the demands of the objective law that relations of production must correspond to the nature and level of development of the productive forces. The bourgeoisie stands on guard over capitalist property and exploiting regimes; bourgeois law, protected by the state power of the bourgeoisie and its allies, sanctifies this property and the existing social order.

A social force must be organised capable of bringing down the bourgeoisie, and breaking its resistance in order to demolish the exploiting regime, revoke laws intended for its protection, to nationalise the means of production and establish and consolidate the new order. The working class is this social force; together with its allies, it overpowers the exploiters during socialist revolution and establishes its own dominance and political power which is necessary to destroy the old order, nationalise the means of production and create a new social system and legislation.

To the extent that the affirmation of the socialist mode of production is the realisation of the basic interests of the working class which is, at that time, the only bearer of the new mode of production, working-class power is necessary for any country that makes the transition from capitalism to socialism, while proletarian dictatorship is a paramount and necessary condition for social progress.



Why does the workers' leadership of society inevitably mean its political rule? What are the specific social conditions which make proletarian dictatorship inevitable?

The principal circumstance that makes the dictatorship of the proletariat necessary is the presence in society of *exploiting classes* which resist the socialist cause and endeavour to restore capitalism. It is this resistance from the exploiters that makes their suppression inevitable and dictatorship over them necessary. Lenin wrote: "The indispensable characteristic, the necessary condition of dictatorship is the *forcible* suppression of the exploiters as a *class*."<sup>1</sup>

In any country that makes a revolutionary transition from capitalism to socialism, there always are the bourgeoisie, the exploiting classes who will never renounce their privileges of their own accord or without pressure from the working people. The bourgeoisie and the exploiters will not vanish by themselves the following day after the workers' political revolution. The dictatorship of the proletariat is necessary to break down the resistance of the exploiters to the building of the new society.

Today, new opportunities and new ways for the workers to consolidate their rule are opening up in many advanced capitalist states where the working class constitutes an overwhelming majority of the economically active population and can count on support from the bulk of the population. In this connection, one may hear again and again the voices of those who cast doubt on the need for proletarian dictatorship, saying that there is no need for the majority to resort to violence to put down the exploiting minority. At best these arguments are misguided and attributable to an abstract approach to the issue. There is no doubt that if the working class constituted the government in a society which was not organised on the principles of domination and subordination, the will of the majority would be sufficient to create a real superiority of the working class which might be used to bring the exploiting minority into line. The trouble is that workers' power is not consolidated in the abstract, but in a bourgeois state where the bourgeoisie possesses all the material attributes of coercion; the working class consolidates

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 256.

its power during the class struggle with that bourgeois power, as it destroys and suppresses bourgeois resistance and as it wins over the vacillating groups of working people.

A very compelling reason why proletarian dictatorship is necessary is the presence in society not only of *exploiting classes* but of *other classes of working people and social groups of a non-socialist nature*. All groups of working people except the working class—i.e., the petty bourgeoisie and the peasants, are associated with private property and a certain non-socialist type of production. The intellectuals and white-collar workers also have their own peculiar characteristics. Since the only bearer of the socialist type of production at that stage is the working class, it has to carry out its will by reorganising production along socialist lines and it "must dominate over all other classes".<sup>1</sup>

This explains the need for the proletariat not to share its power with anyone at this stage. Of course, the dominating position of the working class is far from identical in respect of its enemies—the exploiters, and its allies—the working people. Lenin wrote: "Only the proletariat may dominate. But this is applied in one way to the small peasant, in another to the middle peasant, in another to the landowner, and in yet another to the petty bourgeoisie."<sup>2</sup>

The social nature of the petty bourgeoisie, including the peasants, is twofaced and contradictory: they are at once workers and property owners. This determines their wavering between the working class and the bourgeoisie, their shifts from one camp to another. Left to themselves, they would not come to socialism. The working class, therefore, has the exceptionally important task of attracting the non-socialist working classes and groups to its side and explaining to them that their vital interests can only be satisfied through socialism, which would ensure a transformation of the social nature of these classes and groups.

The experience of all the socialist states shows that the socialist transformation of petty-commodity producers comprises a complex sphere of activity of proletarian dictatorship. No country in the world can evade this problem, inso-

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 212.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 214.



far as petty-commodity production exists everywhere in one degree or another.

It is wrong to think that the epoch-making scientific changes at work in the world today which introduce essential corrections to the class structure of capitalist society will make the proletarian dictatorship superfluous in the absence of a petty bourgeoisie. No matter how advanced capitalism may be in any one country, it will never function in a "pure" form. That is to say, no bourgeois country will witness the disappearance of middle strata of the petty bourgeoisie, i.e., those social groups who by their nature occupy an intermediate position between the working class and the bourgeoisie. Hence, the workers' political domination will for varying periods have to exist in any country that makes the change from capitalism to socialism.

Since the vital interests of the working class coincide with those of other groups of working people—small producers, intellectuals and white-collar workers, the working class will largely pursue a policy of persuasion and explanation in regard to them. It will only put a stop to the acquisitive aspirations of these social groups, and the proletarian dictatorship will operate as a force ensuring the leadership of the working people and organisation of socialist forms of their production and labour.

No less important a condition making proletarian dictatorship necessary is the presence in society of *the class struggle*. Because society has classes with a different social nature—the bourgeoisie, petty bourgeoisie and working class—each of them will pursue its own objectives and clash with other social groups. Only proletarian dictatorship which itself grows out of the class struggle can direct social development towards socialism and the abolition of classes.

The establishment of proletarian dictatorship in a country that has taken the socialist road by no means implies an end to the class struggle. Lenin wrote: "The dictatorship of the proletariat is not the end of class struggle but its continuation in new forms. The dictatorship of the proletariat is class struggle waged by a proletariat that is victorious and has taken political power into its hands against a bourgeoisie that has been defeated but not destroyed, a bourgeoisie that has not vanished, not ceased to offer resistance, but has intensi-

fied its resistance."<sup>1</sup> Even after it has consolidated its political power, therefore, the working class cannot renounce the use of force and coercive weapons because of continuing bourgeois resistance. Suffice it to recall the innumerable conspiracies, sabotage, mutinies and armed intervention during the early years of Soviet power, and the armed sorties of the reactionary underground in the people's democracies and the armed counter-revolution in Hungary in 1956 in order to understand that as long as exploiting elements and anti-socialist forces remain in a society building socialism, as long as class struggle exists as socialism is being built, the dictatorship of the proletariat remains the major weapon of that struggle.

Proletarian dictatorship is therefore necessary by virtue of the presence in society of exploiting classes, the class struggle and social groups with non-socialist aspirations and interests. Because they possess a different social nature, the working class, the middle strata and the bourgeoisie strive to take society in different directions. In order to lead society along a socialist path, it is precisely necessary for the workers' will to be dominant and for the working class to become the ruling class. Therein lies the essence of proletarian dictatorship which constitutes a system of workers' political domination formed in socialist revolution and destined to build socialist society.

The great historic role of the proletarian dictatorship as a weapon of the revolutionary transformation of society has been confirmed by the experience of all socialist states as well as the Soviet Union. Lenin's words today have particular cogency: "Everywhere the truth has been revealed that in order to vanquish the capitalists it is necessary during the struggle against exploitation, while ignorance is rife, while people do not yet believe in the new system, that the organised urban factory workers become the ruling class."<sup>2</sup> This axiom is especially valuable because it defines the historical framework of the workers' political rule and indicates that proletarian dictatorship is necessary for a certain period "during the struggle against exploitation", for a time "while

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, pp. 380-81.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 27, p. 476.



ignorance is rife, while people do not yet believe in the new system". This period culminates in the victory and consolidation of socialism.

### 3. Essence and Forms of Proletarian Dictatorship

A scientific interpretation of the social and historical meaning of the concepts of dictatorship, revolutionary dictatorship and proletarian dictatorship belongs to Marxism-Leninism which had summed up the experience of world history. Lenin noted: "On an international scale, the history of the doctrine of revolutionary dictatorship in general, and of the dictatorship of the proletariat in particular, coincides with the history of revolutionary socialism, and especially with the history of Marxism. Moreover—and this, of course, is the most important thing of all—the history of all revolutions by the oppressed and exploited classes, against the exploiters, provides the basic material and source of our knowledge on the question of dictatorship."<sup>1</sup>

After studying the Leninist interpretation of the meaning of dictatorship in general, and the proletarian dictatorship in particular, it would be incorrect to present this interpretation as something given once and for all, something unalterable. Having carefully analysed history and revolutionary practice, Lenin tirelessly developed the Marxist philosophy of dictatorship and the proletarian dictatorship freeing it from outmoded ideas and enriching it with new conclusions. In the immense store of Leninist ideas there are theses, formulae and characteristics that refer to features of proletarian dictatorship that are general, most essential and compulsory for all countries and, at the same time, they refer to the specific ways it operates at the various stages of the battle for socialism and the particular conditions existing in any one country.

If we leave aside for a moment Leninist ideas devoted to specific aspects of proletarian dictatorship caused by a particular situation in a country, we may deal first with certain general propositions that include an interpretation of

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 340.

dictatorship as such, the crux of proletarian dictatorship and the forms of proletarian dictatorship.

The interpretation of the essence of dictatorship is not only an arena of acute ideological struggle but the principal starting point for a scientific approach to describing proletarian dictatorship.

As opposed to a bourgeois interpretation which counterposes dictatorship to democracy and looks upon dictatorship as the rejection of all liberties and democratic guarantees, as arbitrary rule and the abuse of power in the interests of a personal dictator, Lenin and Marx based themselves upon the idea that in a society where antagonistic classes contend, dictatorship is a social, historical and law-governed phenomenon that expresses the domination of social classes rather than of individuals and chance groups.

Lenin understood *proletarian dictatorship as a system of working-class political domination born in socialist revolution and destined to do away with human exploitation, to create and consolidate socialism*. Proletarian dictatorship is not proletarian state alone, it is a whole system of associations, organisations and establishments through which working-class power is implemented.

In terms of its *social meaning*, proletarian dictatorship presupposes, above all, the *dominating* and *leading position of the working class* in the country and state, which means that the ruling class, using its political power, fulfils its historic mission. Lenin wrote: "The class that took political power did so in the knowledge that it was doing so alone. That is intrinsic to the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat. It has meaning only when one class knows that it is taking political power alone, and does not deceive others or itself with talk about 'popular government by popular consent through universal suffrage'."<sup>1</sup>

During the period of its dictatorship—i.e., the period of socialist construction, the working class naturally expresses the interests also of other groups of working people and attracts their representatives into running public affairs, but no dictatorship of the whole people is possible for the conditions which do not yet exist; at that stage the working class

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 32, pp. 273-74.



alone is the consistent bearer of the socialist mode of production and therefore only its firm leadership can guarantee progress towards socialism.

Yet the power of the working class alone which constitutes the essence or nucleus of proletarian dictatorship does not mean that the working class itself in fulfilling its historic mission needs no help or solid and firm *alliance* with other working people. Furthermore, the power of the working class can only operate if it rests on a certain type of *alliance between the working class and the non-proletarian workers*. Lenin said: "The dictatorship of the proletariat is a specific form of class alliance between the proletariat, the vanguard of the working people, and the numerous non-proletarian strata of the working people (petty bourgeoisie, small proprietors, the peasantry, the intelligentsia, etc.), or the majority of these strata, an alliance against capital, an alliance whose aim is the complete overthrow of capital, complete suppression of the resistance offered by the bourgeoisie as well as of attempts at restoration on its part, an alliance for the final establishment and consolidation of socialism."<sup>1</sup> It is important to note, too, that Lenin emphasised the need for "an alliance between economically, politically, socially, and spiritually different classes,"<sup>2</sup> an alliance that made up the foundation of proletarian dictatorship.

"The special" form of this alliance is due to its being a class alliance in the interests of socialism. The working class, in implementing *its* power and *its* will, thereby expresses also the vital interests of the overwhelming majority of the population—the poor peasants, the urban petty bourgeoisie, the working intellectuals and white-collar workers whose social organisations or parties have every opportunity for acting within the bounds that correspond to the interests of building socialism. In other words in implementing its power, the working class expresses the vital interests of the poor peasants, the urban petty bourgeoisie, the intellectuals and white-collar workers as the interests of working people but not of property owners, i.e., it does not stand by all their class and social interests. It attracts them under its leadership to run

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 381.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

state affairs precisely as working people, but it by no means shares power with them as private owners and petty-bourgeois property owners. The whole *raison d'être* of building socialism, Lenin pointed out, consists in the fact that the working class develops its alliance with non-proletarian groups of working people and severely partitions off the worker from the property-owner in the peasant and petty bourgeois and it attracts them only as the workers, inasmuch as they act as allies of the working class in the fight against the bourgeoisie and for socialist change of all society, including themselves.

In mentioning the class basis of proletarian dictatorship, it would be wrong to imagine that an alliance of workers and poor peasants must become such a basis in literally all capitalist states. The fact is that as a result of industrial development and especially scientific and technological revolution, serious modifications have occurred in the social structure of many highly developed capitalist states: Britain lacks peasants as a class and the USA has farmers as a social group that is not a peasantry inherited by capitalism from feudalism; peasants in West Germany and other advanced capitalist states are now in a tiny minority and comprise less than 10 per cent of the population; on the other hand, the proportion of white-collar workers and working intellectuals and employees in the service industries has greatly increased. In North America, for example, those employed in agricultural production (i.e., farm labourers and capitalists as well as farmers) comprised 4-5.5 per cent in 1968, while those people engaged in the service industries amounted to 52-54 per cent.<sup>1</sup> These groups are becoming the most numerous potential ally of the working class in its fight against the monopolies and human exploitation. There is hardly any need to prove that the approach of the working class and its vanguard to these social groups cannot be the same as to poor peasants; very different forms, ways and means are necessary to attract to the working class the majority of working people, intellectuals and white-collar workers, methods that differ from those which the working class applies in regard to the poor peasants.

<sup>1</sup> See *Mirovaya ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya* No. 3, 1969, p. 152 (in Russian).



In terms of its mechanism and institutions, the proletarian dictatorship represents a new type of political organisations of society destined to ensure that the will of the working class as the creator of socialism is carried out. On this point, Lenin developed the idea of Marx that the bourgeois state machine had to be smashed. As on other questions, Leninism here fights on two fronts: against revisionism and against dogmatism.

Revisionists point to the real changes in the political organisation of bourgeois society and maintain that the working class can carry out its historic mission with the help of the prevailing power mechanism in the framework of bourgeois democracy. In a number of capitalist states today where the workers have mass parties and large representation in central and local government, such views are particularly common. In reality, however, working-class power cannot be established within the bounds of the political mechanism formed on capitalist soil.

This is primarily due to the class character of that political mechanism, the fact that the major organisations that implement power operate within the framework of judicial laws that sanctify capitalist property and human exploitation. Moreover, in their composition, ties and social tendencies, the key power agencies—the government apparatus, courts, army and police—guard monopoly interests and the capitalist regime. A socialist transformation of the foundation of social life cannot take place today without the revolutionary demolition of these organisations and without replacing their agencies by popular power.

On the other hand, even the most sophisticated democracy that has grown up on the basis of a bourgeois regime cannot be adapted to cope with the completely new problems of building socialism; the limits of that democracy, the forms and organisations it uses are far too narrow for accommodating the creative endeavour of millions of people. That is why a radical change in the modes of implementing power is necessary and some organisations and political forms will have to be abolished while others will be expanded or created; a qualitative change in the political organisation of society is necessary for it to become democratic in a new way—for millions of working people—and dictatorial in a new

way—against the bourgeoisie and its allies resisting socialist change.

By contrast with revisionists, dogmatists do not deny the need to smash the exploiting state machinery. But they ignore the changes underway in many countries and scorn Lenin's ideas on the need to use various elements of the former political organisation in building socialism. The dogmatists ignore the important gains by the working people—creation of mass political parties, the consolidation of their positions in parliament, and control of certain parts of local government agencies. Certain elements of the future political organisation of the working people are being formed in all these spheres. There are no grounds for ignoring the fact that the development of state-monopoly capitalism, the mounting application of means for forecasting, programming and regulating create within the bounds of capitalist society new and very important means for controlling the economy which in certain respects can be put at the service of socialism.

In denouncing revisionist and dogmatic notions of the ways a working-class power mechanism is formed, Leninism takes a dialectical approach: the basic oppressive part of the former mechanism must be destroyed and replaced by a qualitatively new organisation of the working class while certain aspects may be augmented by new meaning and wielded in the interests of socialism.

Irrespective of the conditions in which revolution has taken place, the new mechanism of working-class power includes a whole set of political and social organisations and institutions that the working class will use. It must have a complicated structure by virtue, on the one hand, of the multi-faceted problems that confront proletarian power and, on the other, of the dissimilarity of the society in which it has to tackle those problems.

Because the workers' dictatorship has to tackle different problems (economic, social, political, ideological, military and foreign), it cannot everywhere use identical organisational forms. The workers have to create such weapons of their power as a militia and an army so as to suppress opposition from the *ci-devant* exploiters, to keep law and order and repulse attempts at imperialist intervention. To encourage



the initiatives of the working people, other establishments and organisations are necessary; state, economic and other organisations have to be created in order to abolish the capitalist order and to begin economic and cultural construction. If we bear in mind that working-class power is implemented in a society where the most diverse classes and social groups exist, where the most diverse contradictions are intertwined, it is obvious that the working class in power cannot take an identical attitude to them either in essence or in form. Lenin wrote: "... We have here a complex arrangement of cogwheels which cannot be a simple one; for the dictatorship of the proletariat cannot be exercised by a mass proletarian organisation. It cannot work without a number of 'transmission belts' running from the vanguard to the mass of the advanced class, and from the latter to the mass of the working people."<sup>1</sup>

A key position in the mechanism of proletarian dictatorship belongs to the proletarian state with all its attributes and to the Marxist-Leninist party of the working class which, not being a government organisation, is nonetheless the leading and directing power behind the whole proletarian dictatorship. This dictatorship relies also on other organisations of the working class, the working people and on trade unions and organisations like a national front. Lenin wrote: "... Only the political party of the working class, i.e., the Communist Party, is capable of uniting, training and organising a vanguard of the proletariat and of the whole mass of the working people that alone will be capable of withstanding the inevitable petty-bourgeois vacillations of this mass and the inevitable traditions and relapses of narrow craft unionism or craft prejudices among the proletariat, and of guiding all the united activities of the whole of the proletariat, i.e., of leading it politically, and through it, the whole mass of the working people. Without this, the dictatorship of the proletariat is impossible."<sup>2</sup>

The entire proletarian dictatorship system operates with a single aim: to guarantee the victory of the working class in the class struggle, do away with human exploitation and

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 246.

build socialism. Therein lies the historic destiny and role of the proletariat.

When we look at proletarian dictatorship as the political domination of the working class won by revolutionary means, we must see that this political power may have varying characteristics depending on the specific circumstances (in arising, operating and in its structure), and it can bring to the forefront various of its aspects that are more important for the fulfilment of its historic role. All this has to be taken into account so as not to lose sight of the features of proletarian dictatorship that are general, basic and inevitable for every country, so as not to replace them by various other characteristics that may be exceptionally important but are not compulsory for successfully building socialism in all states. The Leninist heritage has various general and particular characteristics and definitions of proletarian dictatorship.

It is quite clear that when speaking of proletarian dictatorship as the law of transition from capitalism to socialism, one must interpret this concept in its broad meaning. In giving a general definition to this concept, Lenin wrote: "If we translate the Latin, scientific, historico-philosophical term 'dictatorship of the proletariat' into simpler language, it means just the following:

"Only a definite class, namely, the urban workers and the factory, industrial workers in general, is able to lead the whole mass of the working and exploited people in the struggle to throw off the yoke of capital, in actually carrying it out, in the struggle to maintain and consolidate the victory, in the work of creating the new, socialist social system."<sup>1</sup>

Thus *the working-class political domination and leadership over all working people to transform capitalism into socialism in a revolutionary way* is the major and general facet and essence of the concept of proletarian dictatorship; this constitutes the content of any form of political power in a society making a transition from capitalism to socialism.

A proletarian dictatorship which is operating in a country certainly has other important and unimportant aspects, characteristics, forms of manifestation and methods of implementation. There is no doubt that working-class power estab-

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 29, p. 420.



lished in an armed uprising or civil war is bound to have specific features that distinguish it from working-class power established peacefully.

It was in connection with just such conditions of proletarian dictatorship that Lenin frequently described it as a *special state structure*, a political power developing out of civil war. In a situation where the establishment of proletarian dictatorship is possible only through armed struggle and armed uprising (as happened in Russia in October 1917), these characteristics are also essential and necessary but they cannot be mechanically extended to other circumstances in which a peaceful path to socialism is possible, especially with the use of parliament. Consequently, these characteristics are not of universal importance.

Latter-day Right- and "Left"-wing opportunists prey on just such facts. They propound their own definitions of proletarian dictatorship which describe not its general but its specific characteristics, that may be very important in certain circumstances; they counterpose them to the communist idea that a peaceful path to socialism is possible without civil war and without using armed violence and without bloodshed. Under the pretext of sticking up for Leninism "Left"-wing opportunists in fact distort it. They identify Leninism with a denial of any possibility of proletarian power being established peacefully, without civil war and bloodshed. On the other hand, Right-wing opportunists try to justify their utter renunciation of the Leninist notion of proletarian dictatorship in general by referring to the fact that in a peaceful transition to socialism this special characteristic of the proletarian dictatorship does not apply.

Neither Marx nor Lenin tied their hands by any single theory of methods and paths of gaining power. Another point is worthy of note: the recognition alone of a peaceful path to socialism means for "Left"- and Right-wing opportunists rejection of Lenin's theory of proletarian dictatorship. Yet Marx and Lenin considered proletarian dictatorship necessary and, at the same time, pointed out the possibility of a peaceful revolution. This fact demonstrates the insolvency of opportunist attacks on Marxism-Leninism.

One more anti-communist and opportunist falsification of Leninism deserves a mention. In their attempts to divert the

common people in capitalist states from fighting for proletarian dictatorship, the opponents of Leninism try to exploit the mistakes made in the Soviet Union during the personality cult when socialist legality was infringed upon. They maintain that these events that were alien to Leninism and the socialist system followed from the Leninist idea that proletarian dictatorship is a power which is not bound by any laws.

In thereby trying to portray the proletarian dictatorship as a state of lawlessness, violence and arbitrary rule, the opponents of Leninism conceal the fact that Lenin referred only to the period when proletarian power was being established and, most importantly, they keep silent *about which laws and the laws of which class are referred to*. Yet this is the crux of the matter. When Lenin wrote that proletarian dictatorship is a power not bound by any laws, he had in mind the definite juridical laws which protected the domination of capital and private property and human exploitation. As an agency of socialist revolution, proletarian dictatorship cannot, of course, be bound by any such laws; it develops as they are being repealed, and new economic, political and legal conditions are being created; it is based on new revolutionary, proletarian and extremely humane laws and standards of social relations.

Marxism does not deny the positive aspects of bourgeois democracy by comparison with despotism and fascism; moreover, in present-day circumstances Marxism regards the democratic rights and freedoms existing in a number of capitalist states as a condition for the possible revolutionary path to socialism through parliament, i.e., a representative body created by the constitutional means. In the event of the proletariat and its allies successfully taking power, however, the workers in full accordance with the popular will would certainly try to amend legislation to ensure the effective implementation of the popular will and popular power.

Since the bourgeoisie itself does not always regard its own constitutions and laws as inalienable and it changes them depending on the situation, it would be an opportunist betrayal of the revolution to demand that the proletariat maintain bourgeois laws that sanctify exploitation.

Meanwhile, no matter in what way or form proletarian dictatorship is established, it is not a rule based on lawless-



ness and anarchy. On the contrary, as soon as socialist states come into being, as history shows, they create and support their revolutionary socialist legality, the most humane and just legality in history based on the principles of combating human exploitation and aimed at eliminating exploiting classes and social disparities between the town and countryside, mental and physical labour, and at ensuring conditions for building a classless communist society.

Socialism cannot be reached without bourgeois legality being surmounted and revolutionary proletarian legality established in its place. One cannot be a Marxist and reconcile oneself to any opportunism that rejects in a socialist revolution and proletarian dictatorship the destruction of bourgeois legality which stands on guard over private property. One cannot remain a Marxist without being an opponent of any anarchy or despotic lawlessness, without recognising the need for creating and strictly observing revolutionary socialist legality that protects rights and liberties and the socialist gains of the working people from any encroachments. It is only through proletarian dictatorship, the most humane and just class power, a power reflecting the interests of the overwhelming majority of the population that society can complete its revolutionary leap out of the realm of need into the realm of freedom.

While recognising the need to establish proletarian dictatorship during the transition from capitalism to socialism, Leninism emphasises the inevitability of a *variety of forms* of the new power. Lenin wrote: "The transition from capitalism to communism is certainly bound to yield a tremendous abundance and variety of political forms, but the essence will inevitably be the same: *the dictatorship of the proletariat*."<sup>1</sup>

History has convincingly confirmed the veracity of that conclusion. Up to the present, the revolutionary practice of the working class has accumulated very different political forms in which proletarian dictatorship has taken shape or exists today; they include the Paris Commune (the first working-class power in history, however short lived), Soviet power in Russia that has existed over half a century, the Hungarian Soviet Republic of 1919, and workers' power in

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 413.

several European and Asian states and in Cuba.

As a rule, when we examine forms of proletarian dictatorship, we compare the Soviets and people's democracy as two of its salient forms. This comparison enables us to pinpoint the most important distinctions between these two international forms of proletarian power, inasmuch as they are typical of the revolutionary development of a number of countries. Meanwhile, there is no doubt that in every country both forms of power have their own individual features as, for example, the Soviets in Russia or in Hungary in 1919, and people's democracy in Bulgaria or Rumania.

If we compare people's democracy as a form of proletarian dictatorship possessing several features common for all or most people's democracies with the Soviets as a different form of proletarian dictatorship, particularly in the form that it has taken in Russia, we may observe the following principal differences.

A characteristic of the Soviets as a form of proletarian dictatorship before the adoption of the 1936 Soviet Constitution was the disenfranchisement of the exploiters, the holding of unequal, indirect and open elections to the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies. By comparison, people's democracy normally retained, even during the transitional period to socialism, universal and equal suffrage for all citizens, including the bourgeoisie and exploiting groups.

Another feature of the Soviets is that they have operated in a one-party state (Left-wing Socialist Revolutionaries and other parties only took part in the work of the Soviets for a short time). By contrast, people's democracy acts as a political organisation within a two-party or multi-party system, as in Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Poland and the German Democratic Republic. It needs to be stressed, however, that in all cases the Marxist-Leninist parties play the leading role.

Moreover, the development of people's democracy by contrast with that of the Soviets is closely connected with the presence of a national or patriotic front through which the actions of the various parties and social organisations are coordinated for carrying out the programmes of building socialist society.

Another feature of the Soviets is that they comprise a single system of state organisations from top to bottom;



by contrast, people's democracy combines certain pre-revolutionary forms of political organisation and institutions, such as parliament and the structure of state administration, inherited from the past, with new forms, such as local national committees and Soviets, set up on revolutionary popular initiative. The new socialist content of state power has both brought into being new forms of political organisation and, due to the specific conditions of revolutionary development, it has gradually penetrated some old forms, changed their functions and nature and subordinated them to the tasks of socialist construction.

Despite the differences in the various forms, however, during the period of socialist construction, the essence both of a Soviet and of a people's democratic regime is the same: "the Soviet regime and the popular democratic regime," the famous Bulgarian revolutionary Georgi Dimitrov once said, "are two forms of one and the same power—the power of the working class in alliance with and at the head of the working people of town and country. They are two forms of the dictatorship of the proletariat."

Fresh prospects are opening up for the emergence of new forms of proletarian dictatorship today when the forces of democracy and socialism have increased tremendously throughout the world. The reason for this conclusion is the undoubted overall weakening of the position of the bourgeoisie and the consolidation of the workers' position both in the world as a whole and within a number of capitalist states. The bourgeoisie is finding it increasingly difficult to ward off the revolutionary popular onslaught headed by the working class and its vanguard. The workers are gaining more and more ground and using increasingly different forms of struggle in moving towards the seizure of political power.

#### 4. Historical Boundaries of Proletarian Dictatorship

For many decades, bourgeois propaganda has falsified Marxism-Leninism and tried to scare the workers with the bogey of a "communist dictatorship". It has tried to portray proletarian dictatorship as an all-consuming Moloch that requires innumerable victims for the sake of communist organisation. In deliberately identifying communism with

dictatorship, and proletarian dictatorship with a dictatorial regime, bourgeois ideologists have depicted the communist social system as a totalitarian regime or a despotic hierarchy, i.e., a society which by its very nature will always require a dictatorial regime.

Marx, Engels and Lenin made short shrift of the reactionary nature of such perverted notions and constantly stressed that by its nature and mechanism, proletarian dictatorship was the most democratic and humane political power. At the same time, they emphasised the transitory nature of proletarian dictatorship, saying that Communists did not regard it as an end in itself or as an attribute of communism, but only as a necessary and inevitable means for creating socialist society.

Marx defined the transitional period as follows: "Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. Corresponding to this is also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but *the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat*."

"Now the programme does not deal with this nor with the future state of communist society."<sup>1</sup> From this it is patently obvious that Marx spoke of proletarian dictatorship in the period of transition from capitalism to the initial phase of communism, while in regard to this initial phase he referred to the future statehood of communist society.

Lenin worked on these problems at a later period. He made the fundamental idea of Marx more specific and applied it to the situation in the new epoch. In regard to the two phases of communist society, Lenin called the first socialism and the second—communism. After all, events had posed the question of the practical implementation of the lower phase of communism and thereby made it necessary to develop a corresponding concept and to define its content more precisely. Although there could be no question at the time of proletarian dictatorship becoming a practical issue requiring a specific indication of its period of time and scope of operation, nonetheless Lenin less and less associated proletarian dictatorship with an undifferentiated concept of "transition to commu-

<sup>1</sup> K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* (in three volumes), Vol. 3, p. 26.



nism" and increasingly and more definitely connected it with the transition to socialism.

In examining the transition from capitalism to socialism, Lenin precisely defined the boundaries of proletarian dictatorship within this period. In saying that proletarian dictatorship was necessary to banish human exploitation and to create a socialist society, he wrote: "This object cannot be achieved at one stroke. It requires a fairly long period of transition from capitalism to socialism, because the reorganisation of production is a difficult matter, because radical changes in all spheres of life need time, and because the enormous force of habit of running things in a petty-bourgeois and bourgeois way can only be overcome by a long and stubborn struggle. That is why Marx spoke of an entire period of the dictatorship of the proletariat as the period of transition from capitalism to socialism."<sup>1</sup> This last thought is particularly important: Lenin made it very clear that the Marxist "political transitional period" from capitalism to communism should be understood as a period of transition from capitalism to socialism; it was for that period that proletarian dictatorship was necessary.

Thus, Marx and Lenin essentially took the same attitude: that *the dictatorship of the proletariat* is necessary for the transition from capitalism to socialism. When they did not specify the stage of the new formation, however, they often referred to this transition to socialism as the transition to communism. It is this fact that is used today by "Left"-wing opportunists to attribute to Marx and Lenin a completely different idea that does not accord with the spirit of Marxism-Leninism. They maintain that according to Marx and Lenin, the proletarian dictatorship is necessary not only for building socialism but for reaching the second phase of communist society, for eliminating all class distinctions right up to complete communism.

Let us turn now to the facts. The years of proletarian dictatorship in the Soviet Union have resulted in the building of a socialist society; this means that the exploiting classes and human exploitation have been destroyed. But the historic mission of the working class in forming a classless society does not end with the building of socialism. Socialism is

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 388.

merely the first phase of communist society at which the social and political unity of all working people has been achieved but classes and social strata of working people continue to exist. The mission of the working class is to lead society into the second and higher phase of communism, to the complete elimination of all class and social differences. The working class, therefore, continues to carry out its leading role during communist construction.

When socialism is won and consolidated and as it moves towards communism, the workers direct their efforts at building a developed socialist society, creating the material and technological basis of communism, ensuring that socialist relations of production grow into communist relations and moulding a new type of man. These grandiose tasks, that constitute an important part of the workers' historic mission, are implemented in a situation where there are no antagonistic clashes and the whole of society is united socially, politically and ideologically.

It goes without saying that this new situation, conspicuous for the unity and solidarity of all social groups, no longer requires that the working class should have a political organisation of society that would ensure the suppression of classes hostile to socialism, insofar as these classes no longer exist; it no longer requires the working class to use force against other social groups in implementing its leading role, since these groups themselves have the same objectives and strive to achieve communist ideals. Working-class leadership in that situation inevitably loses the character of domination and dictatorship.

With the complete construction of socialism in the USSR, therefore, "the dictatorship of the proletariat as new forms of the class struggle of the proletariat", exhausted its usefulness and ceased to be necessary.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile, class struggle continues internationally. The working class continues to use the same socialist state to carry out the functions of defending the homeland from external attack. Internationally, the working class of the Soviet Union takes active measures to ensure peace, international security and favourable conditions for the liberation struggle of working people everywhere.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 30, p. 95.



Proletarian dictatorship is a product and weapon of class struggle, a means of dispensing with human exploitation. That is why it is not eternal. It stops being necessary when and where the exploiting classes cease to exist, where the working classes develop as groups with a single socialist nature, where the class struggle ends and when a socialist society has been created and consolidated.

Socialist society, however, is by no means a society without political power or political organisation. Such anarchistic notions are profoundly alien to Marxism. After all, even after socialism has been built, there continue to exist friendly but different working classes and groups, a measure of control is necessary over labour and consumption, public order has to be maintained, the organised and smooth-functioning activity of all members of society has to be ensured, and a whole set of foreign policy tasks remain. Therefore, the proletarian dictatorship does not disappear without trace even when socialism has been completely and finally built; it becomes a government of the whole people under the leadership of the working class, while the state of the proletarian dictatorship becomes an all-people state.

A state of the whole people is a very important part of the political organisation of socialist society. It is the main weapon for realising the interests and will of all of the people when socialism has been built and consolidated and communism is being constructed. In origin, the state of the whole people is not some newly created state, it is a natural outcome of the development of the proletarian-dictatorship state. The state of the proletarian dictatorship and the all-people state are only two different stages in the progress of a single socialist state. The one continues from the other. The working class being the most advanced and organised class carries out the leading role in the socialist state at both stages of its development.

The historic mission of the working class is to destroy capitalism and create communism, and to guide revolutionary popular initiative. Therein lies the essence of the great epoch that begins with the battle of the working class for socialism and ends with the construction of communism on a worldwide scale under its leadership.

## WORLD REVOLUTION AND THE TWO RIVAL WORLD SYSTEMS

The Marxist-Leninist theory of socialist revolution arose out of the multilateral experience of the international working class and it expresses scientifically the general laws of the contemporary world revolutionary process.

### 1. The Leninist Theory of World Socialist Revolution

Capitalism as a world system propelled itself throughout the world and drew more and more countries into its economic, political and cultural orbit. Close interdependence began to develop between countries at the very early stages of capitalism. Even in the era of bourgeois revolutions, therefore, the actions by revolutionary classes expressed both national needs and those of the economic and political development of the entire intertwined system of countries. As a rule, these actions acquired an international character and met an immediate response abroad. As Marx wrote, "The revolutions of 1648 and 1789 were not *English* and *French* revolutions; they were revolutions of a *European* pattern. . . . These revolutions expressed still more the needs of the world of that day than of the sectors of the world in which they occurred, of England and France."<sup>1</sup>

Bearing in mind the close ties between capitalist states, Marx and Engels felt that the socialist revolution, too, wher-

<sup>1</sup> K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* (in three volumes), Vol. 1, Moscow, 1969, pp. 139-40.



ever it would take place, would inevitably be part of a world-wide process. Revolution, Marx observed, will have "to leave its national soil forthwith and *conquer the European terrain*, on which alone the social revolution of the 19th century can be accomplished".<sup>1</sup> Marx and Engels never thought that socialist revolution would have to commence simultaneously in all the advanced capitalist states. They believed that world socialist revolution would involve a more or less lengthy historical period and that different countries would become involved at different times.

Their conclusion was that socialist revolution could not be successful without preliminary victory in a majority of advanced capitalist states, at least in Britain, France and Germany. In a letter to Paul Lafargue in June 1893, Engels wrote: "But it is not the French, nor the Germans, nor the British who, by themselves, will win the glory of having smashed capitalism; if France—PERHAPS—gives the signal, it will be in Germany, the country most profoundly influenced by socialism and where the theory has the most deeply penetrated the masses—where the fight will be settled, and even then neither France nor Germany will ensure final victory so long as England remains in the hands of the bourgeoisie. Proletarian emancipation can be only an international deed."<sup>2</sup>

Lenin's thinking on world revolution took place in the imperialist era, when capitalism had already entered a new stage and many of its laws had been modified. The law, discovered by Lenin, of uneven capitalist economic and political development and the study of its specific operation in the imperialist era had great importance for understanding the mechanism of how the world socialist revolution arose and developed. The sharp intensification of contradictions between the imperialist powers and the uneven maturation of prerequisites for revolution in different parts of the capitalist system, due to this law, enabled him to conclude that socialist revolution could initially be successful in individual states.

This conclusion became the starting point for evaluating the prospects for a growth in the world socialist revolution

<sup>1</sup> Marx, Engels, *Works*, Vol. VII, p. 32 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> F. Engels, P. and L. Lafargue, *Correspondence*, Vol. III, Moscow, p. 271.

in the new era. This revolution included several rounds of relatively independent socialist revolutions that involved only a section of the countries or even a single country, while the capitalist regime was maintained elsewhere. Nonetheless, revolution in each country arose and developed in close connection with the development of the entire capitalist system as a whole, in close association with the balance of power and struggle in the world. Any national socialist revolution was inevitably directed against world imperialism as a whole.

The Great October Socialist Revolution became the first link in the international social revolution of the working class. The Russian Revolution arose as a natural result of the contradictions in the whole world imperialist system at the beginning of the 20th century. It gave, in turn, a mighty impetus to world history and opened up an era of transition of human society from capitalism to socialism.

The revolutionary labour movement in Russia had developed on its own soil, yet under the direct influence of the proletarian struggle in the West. The Russian working class had begun its revolutionary journey by drawing on the experience accumulated by the international working class. It subsequently became one of the most militant vanguards of the international proletariat. Lenin wrote: "The great honour of beginning the revolution has fallen to the Russian proletariat. But the Russian proletariat must not forget that its movement and revolution are only part of a world revolutionary proletarian movement."<sup>1</sup>

Lenin formed his views in an acute struggle with social-reformism, nationalism and the social-chauvinism of the ideological leaders of the Second International. They had rejected proletarian internationalism which stood for the revolutionary initiative of those sections of the international proletariat to whom opportunities were opening up for a direct assault on capitalism and the international support of those vanguard forces from all other sections.

The Leninist theory developed also in contention with the revisionist concepts of "Left"-wing radicalism which treated the connection between international and national interests

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, p. 227.



in a mechanical fashion. Trotsky and his followers essentially precluded any relative autonomy of national revolutions and rejected any possibility of socialist revolution succeeding in a single state. They reduced the whole sense of revolutionary actions in a single country to fermenting from without revolutions in other countries.

Lenin countered the "Left"-wing adventurist views with his dialectical concept of the transition from a national to a world revolution.<sup>1</sup> Underlining the international character of proletarian social revolution, Lenin at the same time saw that the prerequisites for it arising in each separate country matured on the basis of internal conditions. The policy of artificially "inseminating" revolution from without ignores these historically formed conditions, and makes the position of the internal revolutionary forces more difficult, because it allows reactionaries to portray revolution as a product of foreign interference and, on that ground, to fan nationalism.

Lenin considered revolution in Europe possible in the overall European revolutionary situation that developed as a result of the imperialist war and the Russian Revolution in October 1917. Nonetheless, he thought it ridiculous to count on it arising in the various countries within a certain period. In his analysis of the condition of the revolutionary movement in advanced capitalist states, he revealed the serious obstacles in the way of socialist revolution there. He noted that these states had "a bourgeoisie that is fully organised and can rely on all the achievements of modern civilisation and engineering".<sup>2</sup> The workers' revolution in Western Europe will develop much more slowly because there "the capitalists are far stronger, it is far more difficult to rise in revolt".<sup>3</sup> It turned out that the possibilities for a successful revolution created there by the deep-going revolutionary crisis were not realised due to a number of weaknesses in the labour movement. At the decisive moment, the opportunist leaders of the Second International betrayed the socialist cause, divided the working class and thereby helped the bourgeoisie to cope with the crisis.

<sup>1</sup> See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 36, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 27, p. 400.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 31, p. 328.

The difficulties of revolution in the West were that the revolutionary wing of the labour movement had not constituted itself into strong proletarian parties at the time of a revolutionary situation, and most of the working class had not, by their own experience, arrived at an understanding of the need to seize power, and either followed the reformists or took an indecisive vacillating stance. Attempts by advanced sections of the proletariat, therefore, to channel the developing revolutionary situation into socialist revolution did not obtain mass support and were suppressed by the bourgeoisie.

In his sober analysis of the experience of the first three post-revolutionary years, Lenin gave the following evaluation of the situation: hopes for a further expansion and intensification of world revolution "have not materialised in the sense that there has been no rapid or simple solution of the problem . . . they were fulfilled in so far as we achieved the main thing—the possibility has been maintained of the existence of proletarian rule and the Soviet Republic even in the event of the world socialist revolution being delayed".<sup>1</sup> Despite the great complexity of world revolutionary development, the international character of the October Socialist Revolution was confirmed in practice. It was apparent in the widespread support which the revolution received from the proletariat of other countries and in the influence which it had on the world revolutionary movement.

The international working class in the European capitalist states did not overthrow the world bourgeoisie, but international backing for the Russian Revolution came in another form: "In fact, they went halfway in their support, for they weakened the hand raised against us, yet in doing so they were helping us".<sup>2</sup> When the international working class saw the October Revolution as the beginning of the great social emancipation of the working people, it came to its defence. Its demonstrations under the slogan "Hands Off Soviet Russia!" prevented the imperialists from stifling the young socialist republic.

Socialist Revolution in Russia evoked an upsurge in the

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 31, p. 44.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 414.



revolutionary movement all over the world; it made the first breach in the defences of world imperialism and sundered the strong chain of imperialist ties. The October Revolution shook the whole capitalist system to its foundations and inspired a gigantic revolutionary wave that swept around the world. No revolution in the past had evoked such a powerful international response as the Russian Socialist Revolution. In the broad historical perspective, however, its historical significance went far beyond the bounds of this direct reaction. A new historical era began in 1917 which heralded, in Lenin's words, "the abolition of capitalism and its vestiges, and the establishment of the fundamentals of the communist order".<sup>1</sup> The stability and vitality of the capitalist system were completely undermined. It had now entered an age of profound general crisis that embraced the economy, the policy and the ideology. "All over the world," Lenin wrote, "the bourgeois system is experiencing a tremendous revolutionary crisis."<sup>2</sup>

The Russian Revolution demonstrated the historical vacuity of Bolshevism and dealt a crushing blow to reformism. It showed in practice that the development of Marxism, revolutionary traditions of proletarian struggle and the principles of proletarian internationalism were indissolubly connected with Leninism and the activity of the Communists. The impact of opportunism on the labour movement fell off sharply. The German revolutionary leader, Rosa Luxemburg, made the point that the Bolsheviks personified the entire revolutionary honour and capacity for action, which had been buried by social democracy in the West; their October uprising saved both the cause of the Russian Revolution and the honour of international socialism.

The Russian Revolution raised the labour movement to a higher level. Under its influence, most capitalist countries soon saw the birth of communist parties. Conditions matured for creating a Third, Communist, International as an international proletarian organisation which was to play an outstanding role in the history of the labour movement and in forming its revolutionary vanguard.

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 392.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 227.

A no less important consequence of the October Revolution was the crisis that had begun in the imperialist colonial system. The Russian Revolution had awakened the East and greatly encouraged national awareness among the peoples of the colonies and semi-colonies. As it steadily grew, the liberation movement undermined the whole colonial system and prepared its complete disintegration.

The October Socialist Revolution enriched the world revolutionary movement by the first successful experience of the working class taking power, of revolutionary socialist change. It had, in Lenin's words, international significance both in the sense of its effect on all countries and in the sense of the historical inevitability of a repetition, on an international scale, of what had taken place in Russia.<sup>1</sup>

In his evaluation of the Socialist Revolution in Russia from an internationalist standpoint, Lenin regarded it as part of the world revolutionary process. At the same time, inasmuch as the victory had occurred in Russia alone, he was naturally concerned about the subsequent fate of the Russian Revolution in the circumstances of hostile capitalist encirclement.

The peculiarity of the initial stage of the world socialist revolution was that, politically, Russia was ahead of the advanced capitalist states, while it was behind them in the material conditions for the introduction of socialism. If the socialist revolution had occurred in advanced European states, Russia would have been able, with their help, to introduce socialism comparatively quickly, in Lenin's opinion. He wrote: "Since large-scale industry exists on a world scale, there can be no doubt that a direct transition to socialism is possible."<sup>2</sup>

This possibility did not occur due to the mounting difficulties in the way of European revolution; it was increasingly put off. It soon became evident that the Soviet Republic would have to advance alone to socialism for a considerable time. That meant that the way had become more arduous. As Lenin put it, "this slower, more complicated, more

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 33, p. 160.



zigzag development of the socialist revolution in Western Europe has burdened us with incredible difficulties".<sup>1</sup>

Lenin and the Communist Party now had to face the task of determining the place of the first proletarian state in the world revolution and working out its strategic policy in conditions of a relative stabilisation of capitalist relations in other countries.

The interests of further development of the world revolutionary process did not permit any passive expectation of direct action by the proletariat abroad. The advance of a country that had broken free from the capitalist system itself became one of the decisive levers in the world revolution. The only revolutionary strategy for the victorious Russian working class was that of building socialism within the capitalist encirclement.

The proponents of petty-bourgeois revolutionarism—the "Left"-wing Communists and Trotskyists—attempted to foist upon the Party an adventurist policy of provoking revolution by war against the world bourgeoisie. They proposed concentrating all the forces of the Soviet state on bringing socialist revolution to other European states; in their opinion, there lay the only salvation. They regarded the programme of socialist construction in Russia as an expression of national exclusiveness and a brake on world revolution. Lenin and the Party rebuffed this adventurist line and, in essence, capitulation strategy, as something that would put at risk the first real *place d'armes* of world revolution which had been wrenched from capitalism at great cost.

Lenin showed that building socialism initially in one country was the paramount international task of the Russian proletariat and a very important aspect of the further development of socialist revolution. By successfully building socialism, the Russian working class would bolster up the main base of the world revolutionary movement and speed up revolution in other countries.

The close connection between socialist construction in the USSR and the international revolutionary movement was vividly demonstrated in the international solidarity of workers in capitalist states with the Soviet Republic. Therefore,

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 208.

Lenin noted, despite the military and economic superiority of imperialism over the young socialist system, from the point of view of the balance "of the real forces of all classes in all countries—we are the strongest of all".<sup>1</sup> Socialism had only just been established in one country, but it could rely not only on internal forces but on the power of proletarian internationalism: "We possess a world-wide basis, immeasurably wider than was the case in any previous revolution."<sup>2</sup>

As a world process expressing the mature need for transition of all mankind to socialism, the socialist revolution must, sooner or later, go beyond the framework of a single country. The working class of one country, relying on an alliance with non-proletarian workers and support from the international proletariat, can certainly build a complete socialist society. But it cannot alone achieve superiority over imperialism on a world-wide scale. To do that, socialist revolution must enter the world arena and there create a new balance of power in favour of socialism. Lenin wrote, "complete and final victory on a world scale cannot be achieved in Russia alone; it can be achieved only when the proletariat is victorious in at least all the advanced countries, or, at all events, in some of the largest of the advanced countries".<sup>3</sup>

The complete and final victory of socialism in the USSR, the triumph of socialist revolution in a whole group of countries and the formation of the world socialist system testified to the correctness of the Leninist forecast about the paths of transition from revolution, that was victorious in one country, to revolution on an international scale. Today, the social revolution of the proletariat has spread along a broad front and broken the chain of imperialism in a number of places, smashing the foundations of world capitalism and clearing the way for all humanity to advance to socialism.

The world-wide overthrow of the capitalist order and the establishment of a new socio-economic formation is a complex, protracted and many-sided process. Experience has

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 33, p. 151.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 30, p. 449.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 29, p. 58.



borne out the Leninist notion that social revolution in the 20th century is unusually complex and contradictory; it has a great variety of forms in its development and in its deep-going internal unity. Socialist revolution is making headway through an amazing mosaic of social, economic, political, cultural and ideological relationships. The far from complete range of differences inherent in the world capitalist system include modern industry equipped with the most up-to-date techniques alongside primitive modes of farming, advanced forms of state-monopoly capitalism alongside primitive communal orders, the sophisticated class structure of classical capitalism alongside tribal relationships which have not yet been affected or are hardly affected by class differentiation, bourgeois democracy alongside feudal despotic regimes and the power of tribal chieftains. Besides the crying contrast between the developed imperialist powers and the economically weak and backward regions of the world, every capitalist state has its own historical and national peculiarities, its traditions, customs and cultural mores. Imperialism in every country, in Lenin's words, has its own characteristics. Even the trusts and the banks in their concrete form are not the same in different countries. This difference of national conditions makes its imprint also on the proletarian revolutionary movement which has its own specific traits and traditions in each country.

Amidst this great diversity, one cannot count on the world socialist revolution everywhere following the same pattern. "World revolution," Lenin explained, "is not so smooth as to proceed in the same way everywhere, in all countries. If it were, we should have been victorious long ago. Every country has to go through definite political stages."<sup>1</sup> Lenin foresaw that this revolution, "judging by its beginning, will continue for many years and will demand much effort."<sup>2</sup> He laughed to scorn the doctrinaire ideas of a "pure" proletarian revolution in which only two classes would be ranged against one another: the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. In real life, every revolution has a profoundly differentiated social situation.

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 123.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 30, p. 160.

According to Leninist theory, the transition of human society from capitalism to socialism embraces an entire historical era during which individual states or groups of states, by virtue of the maturation of internal conditions, will break free from the capitalist system and form a world socialist system as the prototype of the future single commonwealth of nations. During this transitional era, the advancing communist socio-economic formation exists side by side with moribund capitalism. Between them there is naturally bound to be a rivalry in the course of which socialism increasingly demonstrates its superiority over capitalism. The world socialist revolution, therefore, develops not simply through the class struggle of the proletariat and the revolutionary forces of capitalist states, but through the consolidation of the economic and political power of the main stronghold of revolution—the socialist system.

Numerous revolutionary forces of the democratic and national liberation movement, who do not directly pursue socialist goals, take part in the world revolutionary process. As they shake the foundations of world capitalism, they thereby also converge in a common stream of anti-imperialist struggle and the single world revolutionary process.

The proletarian class struggle in capitalist states and the building of socialism in countries that have torn themselves free from capitalism are closely intertwined with the democratic movements and the national liberation revolutions. The current Programme of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union states: "Socialist revolutions, anti-imperialist national-liberation revolutions, people's democratic revolutions, broad peasant movements, popular struggles to overthrow fascist and other despotic regimes, and general democratic movements, against national oppression—all these merge in a single world-wide revolutionary process undermining and destroying capitalism."<sup>1</sup>

The working class is not alone in making social revolution in this century; it is being made by semi-proletarian, peasant, petty-bourgeois and other sections of the population. This adds certain difficulties and contradictions to world revolution. As Lenin put it, the petty bourgeoisie becomes

<sup>1</sup> *The Road to Communism*, Moscow, 1961, p. 484.



drawn into the revolutionary movement "*with all its prejudices*",<sup>1</sup> bringing into it vacillation, instability, impatience and nationalism.

The contradictions and the lack of consistency in the political behaviour of semi-proletarian petty-bourgeois and other intermediary social sections in the social revolution serve as the source of collisions, temporary delays and even retreats. Whether it is possible to overcome the contradictions and straighten out the zigzags very much depends on the proletarian leadership of the mass movements.

One of the contradictions of world revolution is that over vast areas of the former colonies it develops in a social milieu that is inadequate for socialist goals. The working class is small in these areas and the petty bourgeoisie or peasantry make up the mass forces of the liberation movement. They are often liable to political vacillations from one extreme to another and petty-bourgeois revolutionising. They are particularly prone to outbursts of nationalism that can seriously damage the cause of international solidarity of the revolutionary forces. A moderating proletarian policy and ideological work by the advanced revolutionary vanguard among the masses are necessary to neutralise these tendencies. The trouble is that the influence and positions of the working class are comparatively weak; it is therefore particularly difficult to work out and pursue a proletarian political and ideological policy in the activity of communist parties. Lenin clearly saw this contradictoriness and its consequent difficulties. Hence his careful consideration of the policy that proletarian parties should pursue in the colonies and semi-colonies. He called upon them "to translate the true communist doctrine, which was intended for the Communists of the more advanced countries into the language of every people",<sup>2</sup> in order to group "the elements of future proletarian parties, which will be communist not only in name".<sup>3</sup> He also pondered upon how to "*adjust . . . the Communist Party (its membership, special tasks) to the level of the peasant countries of the colonial East*".<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 355.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 30, p. 162.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 31, p. 150.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 42, p. 202.

It takes a stubborn campaign to overcome petty-bourgeois revolutionism and nationalism. In some instances, the petty-bourgeois influence also penetrates the proletarian party and makes its leaders take erroneous positions. This trend exists in a few countries today: the anti-Marxist policy of the current leadership of the Chinese Communist Party is the most obvious manifestation of this trend that hampers a consolidation of genuinely proletarian forces.

Contradictions in revolutionary development are apparent also in countries which have thrown off colonial domination and are searching for effective ways of social progress. These contradictions also ultimately are due to the lack of a developed economic and social structure. The scope and urgency of change needed in these countries come up against the overall economic and cultural backwardness, the immaturity of those classes, especially the proletariat, which are capable of being a reliable support for radical and, at the same time, stable policy for revolutionary change. All this makes it more difficult to use the favourable prospects that open before these countries and engenders the possibility of temporary setbacks and even reactionary coups.

The composition of the social forces taking part in the revolutionary movement is also widening in the advanced capitalist countries. It is being augmented by people from the petty bourgeoisie of town and country, various groups of intellectuals and employees. This has immense political significance for the revolutionary movement from the standpoint of its prospects and it creates additional opportunities for forming a broad anti-imperialist coalition around the working class. Here too, however, there is a danger of enrolling raw recruits who are sometimes the social source for strengthening various reformist and revisionist influences within the workers' and communist movement.

Back in the days when the social revolution of the proletariat was making its first steps and it seemed to many that its victorious entry on to the world scene was near, Lenin wrote with some vision: "Historical action is not the pavement of Nevsky Prospekt, said the great Russian revolutionary Chernyshevsky. A revolutionary would not 'agree' to a proletarian revolution only 'on the condition' that it proceeds easily and smoothly, that there is, from the outset,



combined action on the part of the proletarians of different countries, that there are guarantees against defeats, that the road of the revolution is broad, free and straight, that it will not be necessary during the march to victory to sustain the heaviest casualties, to 'bide one's time in a besieged fortress', or to make one's way along extremely narrow, impassable, winding and dangerous mountain tracks. Such a person is no revolutionary, he has not freed himself from the pedantry of the bourgeois intellectuals."<sup>1</sup>

This vision of the complex development of a world socialist revolution is readily apparent today. The world revolutionary process is a vital embodiment of the dialectics of struggle in which every step forward is fraught with the danger of unexpected turns and the risk of a blow from the class enemy. Only a never-abating struggle by the revolutionary forces against imperialism and reaction can balk or restrict such threats.

The experience of the world revolutionary movement shows that different trends, engendered by the participation of heterogeneous forces in the struggle, clash in the social revolution of our time. The overall progressive movement of the social revolution does not preclude any deviation from the general line, especially in areas where the social and economic prerequisites of socialism are least mature and where the revolutionary forces of a socialist persuasion are faced by the immensely difficult problem of finding transitional forms of development that would ensure progress in the fight against economic and cultural backwardness.

Lenin wrote about the difficulties and contradictory nature of the world socialist revolution, the multiplicity of conditions for its development at various levels, the sharp turns on its path: one must be on the look-out "in these zigzags, these sharp turns in history, in order to retain the general perspective, to be able to see the scarlet thread that joins up the entire development of capitalism and the entire road to socialism".<sup>2</sup> The socialist prospects for the world revolutionary process are determined to a decisive degree by the

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 67.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 27, p. 130.

struggle and the gains of the international working class, the class that stands at the centre of contemporary development.

## 2. Contention of the Two World Systems Is the Forefront of the 20th Century Social Revolution

The world socialist system is the supreme attainment of the international working class in present-day conditions. It is the most forward section of the social revolution in this century and is a concentration of the economic, social and political power of the state-organised proletariat. It is natural that the countries to have had a socialist revolution should be at the centre of the world revolutionary process. Immediately after the October Revolution, Lenin wrote on this issue: "World political developments are of necessity concentrated on a single focus—the struggle of the world bourgeoisie against the Soviet Russian Republic, around which are inevitably grouped, on the one hand, the Soviet movements of the advanced workers in all countries, and, on the other, all the national liberation movements in the colonies and among the oppressed nationalities."<sup>1</sup>

The breach in the imperialist system brought the class struggle into the sphere of inter-state relations. The contradiction between socialism and capitalism acquired a world-wide character. In its social essence it is similar to the contradiction between labour and capital in capitalist society. Both contradictions express the irreconcilable conflict between the bourgeoisie and the working class. The antagonism between labour and capital was manifest internationally as an antagonism between opposing social systems, one of which is headed by a world bourgeoisie which, though having tasted defeat, is still capable of resistance, while the other is headed by the international working class that has had a decisive but not yet universal victory. The unity of the two series of contradictions determines the close relationship between the rivalry of the world social systems and the class struggle within the capitalist sector of the world. They are two major

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 31, p. 146.



directions of world revolution, in each of which a single social battle for the triumph of the ultimate aims of the working class and the world-wide triumph of socialism develops in specific forms.

Once it has arisen, the contradiction between the two social systems begins to exert a mounting influence on world development. Insofar as the transition from capitalism to socialism comprises the basic content of the contemporary epoch, this contradiction becomes the mainspring of historical process and the prime contradiction of the contemporary world. The character, direction and rate of development of world events depend decisively on its condition and change. It also influences the internal antagonisms of the capitalist system. As was noted in the resolutions of the Communist International many years ago, "this growing contrast between the two systems, which is the kernel of contemporary international relations, affects the further development of the contradictions within the imperialist world".<sup>1</sup> Further, the resolutions adopted at the 6th Plenum of the enlarged Executive Committee of the Communist International stated that "in the present world situation there are everywhere fundamental differences between two systems, two worlds, between which as yet a more or less unstable equilibrium is maintained. On the one side the world of capitalism headed by *America*, on the other side the world of proletarian revolution headed by the *USSR*."<sup>2</sup>

The socialist social system is a living embodiment of real socialism. It concentrates within itself a revolutionary charge of immense power. The diametrically opposed nature of capitalism and socialism and the class forces standing behind them operate most openly and vividly and achieve their highest tension in the relations between the two social systems. It is here, therefore, that the main set of contradictions of world development is to be found.

Since the time it came into being, socialism has been the vanguard of the world social revolution of the proletariat. The fiercest attacks of imperialism have rained down upon

<sup>1</sup> *VIth Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International. Theses, Resolutions, Decisions*, Moscow, 1931, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 6, No. 40, 13th May, 1926, p. 616.

it and the mighty impulses of revolutionary energy have radiated from it. The first socialist state became the mainstay of the world revolutionary process and its appearance signified a great qualitative leap in the world liberation movement. As Lenin noted, "the most significant change that has occurred is the foundation of the Russian Soviet Republic".<sup>1</sup> To show the real face of socialism to everyone meant proving the practical inevitability of its triumph throughout the world and giving the working people confidence in the ultimate victory. Lenin said: "A living example, tackling the job somewhere in one country is more effective than any proclamations and conferences; this is what inspires the working people in all countries."<sup>2</sup>

As long as capitalism held undivided sway in the world, the tasks of the international working class and other revolutionary forces were naturally those of destruction. But as soon as socialism won the day in Russia, the centre of gravity of the victorious revolution moved to creative tasks. A failure to resolve them would have deprived the revolutionary movement of its goal and disorganised it. If we had not resolved that task, Lenin said, "nothing will follow from our successes, from our victories in overthrowing the exploiters, and from our military rebuff to international imperialism, and a return to the old system will be inevitable".<sup>3</sup> We must, he continued, start by "setting an example that will convince the vast mass of the peasants and petty-bourgeois elements, and other countries as well, not in word but in deed, that a communist system and way of life can be created by a proletariat. . . . This is a task of world-wide significance."<sup>4</sup>

Lenin's evaluation of the creative tasks of revolution reveals the limitations of the primitive understanding of revolution as a purely destructive action. This interpretation is typical for petty-bourgeois revolutionaries. The mere transition of the Soviet Republic to practical resolution of the problems of building socialism was interpreted by "Left"-wing doctrinaire socialists as a renunciation of revolutionary aims. The Dutch "Left"-wing Communist, Anton Pannekoek, main-

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 452.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 471-72.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 31, p. 417.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 418.



tained that "the Russian Soviet Republic had to refrain from direct stimulation of revolution in other states".<sup>1</sup> Another "Left"-wing Communist, Hempel, said that the new economic policy might engender "a contradiction between the interests of the world revolutionary proletariat and the transient interests of Soviet Russia".<sup>2</sup> In reply to such "Left"-wing Communists, Clara Zetkin wrote: "Soviet Russia will remain as a proletarian state. It is the first type of a proletarian state in this period of transformation from capitalism to communism. As such, all it does and does not do, all its accomplishments as well as its mistakes and its weaknesses are fruitful lessons for the world proletariat and for the world revolution."<sup>3</sup>

The narrow-minded "Left"-wing doctrinaire interpretation of revolution is apparent in its exclusion of creativity, the main aspect of the revolutionary process. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the world communist movement renounced these simplified views. In the theses of the Central Committee "On the Tasks of the Comintern and the Russian Communist Party (B) in Connection with the Enlarged Plenary Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Communist International", adopted at the 14th Party Conference, it was stressed that "our revolution itself is part of world revolution and ... our success in building a socialist economy is by itself already a major factor in the growth of the world proletarian revolution".<sup>4</sup> The Leninist interpretation of revolutionariness became a cornerstone of the strategy and tactics of the Communist International. A Comintern resolution stated that "the successful progress of the USSR along the road towards socialism is an important factor in the undermining of capitalist stabilisation and in sharpening the general crisis of capitalism".<sup>5</sup> That is why

<sup>1</sup> A. Pannekoek, *Weltrevolution und kommunistische Taktik*, Wien, 1920, S. 47.

<sup>2</sup> *Protokoll des III Kongresses der Kommunistischen Internationale*, Hamburg, 1921, S. 224.

<sup>3</sup> *Bulletin of IV Congress of the Communist International*, No. 9, 17th Nov., 1922, p. 12.

<sup>4</sup> *KPSS v rezolyutsiakh i resheniakh syezdov, konferentsii, plenimov TsK*, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1970, pp. 214-15 (in Russian).

<sup>5</sup> *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 9, No. 46, 4th Sept., 1929, p. 974.

the Soviet Union had become "the axis of the international proletarian revolution".<sup>1</sup>

The victory of proletarian revolution in a whole group of countries and the formation of the world socialist system greatly increased the importance of creative tasks within the world revolutionary process and elevated the revolutionary potential of real socialism. As a result, the part played by the international working class in the social revolution of our time has become even more important. The Declaration of the International Meeting in 1960 stated that "the central factors of our day are the international working class and its chief creation, the world socialist system".<sup>2</sup> Now, it is no longer a single country, but several countries, connected by common class interests in a world system, that form the centre and main base of world revolution. This circumstance means not simply a quantitative growth in the forces of revolution; it is leading to a far-reaching qualitative change in the distribution of class forces internationally.

At the same time, there arise difficult problems of how the community of socialist states is going to operate and develop as an integral system, problems of working out a common plan of campaign against imperialism. Experience shows that resolution of the problems involves great difficulties and demands considerable time. Despite all these problems, caused by teething troubles in the socialist system, the overall extent of its effect on the progress of the worldwide revolution is sharply increasing. This is due to the following factors:

(a) the socialist system is the main cause of the steady shift in the world balance of power in favour of the international working class;

(b) it is the leading force of the world socialist revolution which is successfully tackling the most responsible and complex creative tasks;

(c) it is the decisive force in the fight against imperialism; it is hardly surprising that the forces of international reaction and imperialism see their main aim as weakening and

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> *The Struggle for Peace, Democracy and Socialism*, Moscow, 1961, p. 44.



dividing the world socialist system and isolating it from other revolutionary movements;

(d) it is the living embodiment of a powerful revolutionising force of example which grows in pace with the development of socialism and the intensification of the internal contradictions of capitalism; it acts as a social mirror in which all peoples can see the achievements of the new social system;

(e) it is the main source of international moral and material, political and military assistance to all other revolutionary forces and movements; the growth of its economic and political power extends the opportunities for offering this assistance.

The progress of world socialism and the superiority of socialism over capitalism, which is evident in part of the world, inevitably undermine the foundations of the capitalist system everywhere. That is why the imperialist bourgeoisie have shown constant concern, from the moment socialism appeared, for protecting their capitalist states from its revolutionising influence. In that pursuit, they resort to military provocation and the export of counter-revolution. These methods stem from the aggressive nature of imperialism. The political leaders and ideologists of American imperialism do not conceal the fact that imperialist aggression in Vietnam and expansion in South-East Asia are directed not only against the peoples of that area but against the world socialist system and against its deeper penetration into Asia.

On the other hand, from the very beginning, the state-organised proletariat consistently pursued a policy of peace which was spearheaded against the aggressive nature of imperialism and its constant handmaiden—militarism. This policy revealed to the whole world the humane nature of socialism and its lofty goal of ridding humanity of wars and the consequences associated with them. The policy of peace, Lenin once said, "has increased the propaganda power of our revolution a hundredfold".<sup>1</sup> Socialism has immeasurably more opportunities to extend its advantages over capitalism in peaceful conditions.

The tense struggle between the capitalist and socialist

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 400.

systems is an objective law of our times. Today, both the price of victory for the more progressive system and the very outcome of the battle greatly depend on what forms the rivalry between the systems take. World thermo-nuclear war would set mankind back many, many years and would delay any further developments of social revolution, having destroyed the economic and social conditions that had matured for its victory. The class interests of the proletariat and socialism, therefore, demand that imperialism be forced to contend with socialism in peaceful conditions.

Being guided by the Leninist peace strategy, the 24th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union put forward a specific programme of peace and international cooperation. This programme is realistic and progressive, expresses the class interests of socialism and, at the same time, meets the aspirations of all peoples; it is imbued with the humanism of the advanced class and, simultaneously, it has an anti-imperialist tone voicing international solidarity with the revolutionary forces fighting for social and national liberation.

Peace on earth and the victory of social revolution are organically connected in this century. The strategy of peace is a peace offensive; it forces imperialism on to the defence, into a struggle in conditions unfavourable to it and creates a favourable international situation for the success of all sections of the world revolutionary movement.

The strategy of direct military assault on imperialism which is rowdily advertised by the proponents of petty-bourgeois adventurism is revolutionary in words only. In fact, it is directly connected with the aggressive strategy of imperialism. This foreign policy would deprive the socialist states, the working class and the liberation movements of one of their main levers in mobilising the revolutionary forces—that is, the attacks on the aggressive policy of imperialism and on the export of counter-revolution. This policy would give reactionary circles an excuse to whip up anti-communist hysteria and nationalistic sentiments.

Of course, where imperialism provokes and unleashes local wars, any military repulsion to it from revolutionary forces is justified and correct. In this situation, a military venture against imperialism, as the heroic examples of Vietnam, Cuba



and Korea showed, has the nature of counteracting aggression, defending peace and the democratic principles of international relations that have been trammelled by imperialism.

An acute class struggle is taking place internationally in conditions of peaceful coexistence. Its centre of gravity for the socialist states is shifting into the sphere of positive attainments in economic, social and cultural relations. The economy or material production is the decisive sphere in this momentous struggle, for economic superiority is the most effective lever of influence on the whole course of world history. Lenin stressed that "we are now exercising our main influence on the international revolution through our economic policy. . . . The struggle in this field has now become global. Once we solve this problem, we shall have certainly and finally won on an international scale."<sup>1</sup> Elsewhere, he remarked "capitalism can be utterly vanquished, and will be utterly vanquished by socialism creating a new and much higher productivity of labour".<sup>2</sup>

The economic rivalry between socialism and capitalism is by no means a purely economic issue. It is an issue of great moment and universal significance. Its successful resolution in favour of socialism greatly determines the effectiveness of the foreign policy of the socialist states and their international support for other revolutionary forces, and the effectiveness of the ideological struggle. The economic victory of the socialist system would demonstrate in practical terms the superiority of socialism to the population of capitalist states, would lead to an immense shift in the world balance of power and create a preponderance of material resources for the world social revolution over imperialism. There is no doubt that this would be a decisive step in the direction of world socialist triumph.

The imperialist powers long cherished the hope of resolving the historical dispute with the new social system by means of war. These hopes have been dashed. Nonetheless, even today the most reactionary imperialist circles try to direct the rivalry exclusively along the lines of the arms race. They

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 437.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 28, p. 427.

look upon competition only in a cold war spirit and interpret it singularly in military terms.

From the moment it came into being, however, socialism acted as the champion of peaceful economic competition with capitalism. Soon after the Revolution, Lenin set the country the following task: "We must show the significance of communism in practice, by example. We have no machinery; the war has impoverished us and deprived Russia of her economic resources. Yet we do not fear this duel, because it will be advantageous to us in all respects."<sup>4</sup>

Today, the Soviet Union and a whole group of socialist states have entered a new era of competition with capitalism. They are now developing on an economic and technological basis that is equal to socialism. The gigantic forces of communist civilisation about which Lenin spoke are being uncovered more and more fully, thereby enriching the socialist social system and demonstrating its inexhaustible resources for progress, its ability to resolve the major problems that history has set before human society. In 1969, the International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties noted that the socialist world had entered a new era "when the possibility arises of utilising on a scale far greater than ever before the tremendous potentialities inherent in the new system".<sup>2</sup> Conditions are maturing for new decisive victories in the struggle with capitalism.

The documents of the 24th Party Congress show a specific programme of tasks for the new era of development of genuine socialism in the Soviet Union. The Congress set a task of historic importance: to coordinate the latest scientific attainments with the advantages of the socialist economic system. It emphasised the possibility and need "to steer the economy more fully to resolving the highly diverse tasks relating to the improvement of the people's standard of living".<sup>3</sup> Having defined the main directions of economic and social development of the USSR in the new period, the Congress precisely differentiated each historical stage not only

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 31, p. 457.

<sup>2</sup> *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties*, Moscow 1969, p. 22.

<sup>3</sup> *24th Congress of the CPSU*, p. 51.



in resolving the internal problems of Soviet society, but also in competition with capitalism.

The far-reaching opportunities that are opening up to the socialist system for advancing more swiftly are not going to be realised automatically. Promotion of scientific and technological problems to the front line of the economic competition presents fresh, heightened demands on socialism and makes its improvement a *sine qua non* of further development. This work has already begun. The component parts of this process include economic reforms, new methods of administration and management, an enhanced role of the communist parties, the search for more effective forms of cooperation among the socialist states, the extension of socialist democracy and further blossoming of culture. This means that the communist social formation has advanced to a stage which corresponds to the contemporary stage of building socialism and communism and the existing demands of the scientific and technological revolution.

To achieve these tasks, we have to overcome certain difficulties. Some are due to the difference in the objective state of socialist countries and their diverse economic, social and cultural levels. This explains their different approach to problems that confront world socialism; often this makes it harder to reach a common position.

Moreover, contradictions in the world revolutionary process are reflected in the socialist system. Tendencies arise at certain places that are alien to socialism. Sometimes, as the anti-Soviet policy of the present Chinese leadership shows only too well, these trends even clash with the objective logic of the basic contradiction of the epoch.

This confirms the importance and need for a flexible approach to evaluating the positions and the role of different socialist states in the global rivalry with capitalism. At the present stage of the struggle, the experience of economic, social and political work in the most advanced socialist states that have entered or are entering the stage of mature socialism acquires particular significance. The experience of these states provides a real basis for the socialist ideal and, at the same time, reveals the scientific and political insolvency of petty-bourgeois socialism. One must also take into consideration the fact that the main onus of controlling the

aggressive tendencies of imperialism is shouldered by the socialist states, the Soviet Union above all. This is a heavy burden on the economy and creates a certain amount of strain in some sectors of internal socialist development and restricts the use of newly created opportunities.

Resolution of the complex problems that today confront the socialist states greatly depends upon able leadership by the Marxist-Leninist parties. Armed with a knowledge of the laws of social development, they act as the leading political force able to conduct the working class and all working people through all the difficulties of fighting for the victory of socialism and communism. Historical experience testifies that the communist parties can discharge their duty only if they conduct a consistent class and an internationalist policy in all social spheres. The policy of a working-class party is one of the decisive factors in realising the fresh opportunities offered to world socialism.

The capitalist system is still strong and has considerable resources for retaining its vitality. But the main trend in the world competition between the two social systems is already sufficiently clear. Over a broad historical front, the capitalist system is losing the battle with socialism. The socialist system is in the historical ascendancy on the principal front of social revolution: *"Imperialism can neither regain its lost historical initiative nor reverse world development. The main direction of mankind's development is determined by the world socialist system, the international working class, all revolutionary forces."*<sup>1</sup>

The preponderance of the forces of the international working class and socialism over those of imperialism is being ensured by a constant advance of the revolutionary forces. The world balance of power in favour of socialism does not remain static; it is constantly on the move as socialism is involved in an acute struggle against imperialism, which all the while tries to find means of tilting the balance back in its own favour. As the 1969 Meeting rightly noted, in weighing up the present balance of power, one should not exaggerate nor underestimate the potential of imperialism.

<sup>1</sup> *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow 1969*, p. 13.



The world-wide contest between the two social systems is also a political rivalry. The prospects for historical development and the resolution of all the main issues of world politics depend on its outcome.

Two basic policies reflecting the class nature of each of the systems today clash internationally. The foreign policy of imperialism is a policy of expansion and export of counter-revolution. The foreign policy of socialism is one of international solidarity with the working class and the revolutionary forces of all countries, a battle against imperialism in defence of peace and national independence. The world class struggle between socialism and capitalism is also expressed in the clash of these two foreign policies.

The expansionist aims of the imperialist foreign policy determine the methods of attaining them. The monopoly bourgeoisie bank mainly on an adventurist policy from a position of strength. The political domination of the bourgeoisie over the population has always been based on coercion and it is, therefore, natural that the bourgeoisie should attempt to oppose socialism by force. The more the scales of fortune tip towards socialism, however, the more obvious is the bankruptcy of the position-of-strength imperialist policy.

The balance of power in the world is obliging imperialism to resort more frequently to political and ideological methods of struggle as well as unceasing military provocation. Gustav Husak, First Secretary of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, has clearly described these methods and their importance in imperialist policy: "To understand the policy of contemporary imperialism and appropriately react to it one must avoid one-sidedness. To pay attention only to the extreme manifestations of the violence and plans of imperialism, to orient oneself only on an open frontal conflict and be unprepared for all the artful attacks from pseudo-democratic, pseudo-socialist and pseudo-humane positions, means lapsing into dogmatism. In just the same way, on the other hand, to overestimate and absolutise the new features in the political tactics of imperialism, to accept them as a final departure from its old intentions and methods, means indulging in false illusions, lapsing into opportunism and disarming one's own front in face of the enemy's offensive.

"If world imperialism shifts the emphasis in its efforts from preparing for a blitz destruction of socialism with the use of arms to a striving to erode and disintegrate it gradually, then this is not a sign of its strength, though it does not lessen the threat emanating from imperialism, should we fail to become aware of it, in good time, fully and in all seriousness."<sup>1</sup>

The bourgeois theory of convergence of the two social systems serves as a justification for the contemporary imperialist political and ideological methods; this theory postulates the apparent similarity of the two systems, as if they are two forms of a single "industrial society". Proponents of the convergence theory maintain that these forms are steadily coming together and will probably merge in the future. They maintain that essentially, even today, strong bonds connect the socialist and capitalist systems in a single social system; differences between them are variations of one and the same social structure. Proponents of the theory speculate on the idea that modern scientific progress inevitably involves, for all countries, certain common traits: urbanisation, the conversion of science into a direct force of production and the rapid development of automation. They endeavour to conceal behind these common traits of technical progress the contradictory nature of the basic principles of property relations on which the economy and the whole social life of capitalism and socialism are built. The watershed between the two socio-economic systems is just as definite today as it was half a century ago. The bourgeois and reformist writers picture events as if a certain level of technical progress everywhere automatically creates an identical social system. John Galbraith, the well-known American economist, has written that "the imperatives of technology and organisation, not the images of ideology, are what determine the shape of economic society".<sup>2</sup> In actual fact, no matter how insistent are the objective demands of development of the forces of production, they do not bring any automatic transformation to the social, economic and political system. These objective

<sup>1</sup> *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow 1969*, p. 406.

<sup>2</sup> J. K. Galbraith, *The New Industrial State*, Boston, 1967, p. 7.



demands manifest themselves in quite a different way depending upon the type of property relations existing in a particular country.

The need for a system of ownership based on socialist principles is becoming increasingly acute in the advanced capitalist states by virtue of scientific and technological progress. This shows the need for radical revolutionary change. Of course, socialist relations, too, develop under the influence of scientific progress, but it is a development of another kind and it is manifest in improvement to the existing system of socialist relations of production; these relations correspond to the social character of contemporary forces of production which manifest themselves increasingly during the scientific and technological revolution.

Bourgeois ideologists and reformists frankly counterpose their convergence ideas to the Marxist-Leninist theory of world socialist revolution. The idea behind these theories is to prove that international class struggle is unnecessary. It is hardly surprising that the convergence theory is combined by the ideological opponents of Leninism with the doctrine of "ideological peace", "ideological compatibility" and "end of ideology". They maintain, for example, that some "universal ideology" corresponds to "the single industrial society".

When one looks closer, one can see the anti-communist aspirations of imperialism lurking beneath the "peace-making" theories of "ideological universalism". These theories fulfil a well defined class function in the acute struggle between the two social systems. They serve the imperialist politicians as a means of justifying the strategy of "peaceful penetration" of the socialist states. They bank mainly on the ideological erosion of communism which would lead to the economic and political regeneration of socialism. The American political scientist Zbigniew Brzezinski frankly admits that "the next decade will probably see continuing erosion of the more militant aspects of Marxism-Leninism. Ideological change will help to bring on political change".<sup>1</sup>

It is natural that while imperialism engenders the danger

<sup>1</sup> Z. Brzezinski, "The Framework of East-West Reconciliation", *Foreign Affairs*, Jan. 1968, Vol. 46, No. 2, p. 268.

of war and organises aggressive acts, the socialist states should be concerned for strengthening their defences and safeguarding the gains of the world socialist revolution. The growth in the defensive power of socialism does not involve any aggressive aims; it is due not to the nature of the system but to external need. It is a reaction to the aggressive policy of imperialism. The military might of socialism is put to the service of peace and the guarantee of peaceful conditions for socialist development.

The influence of the socialist system on national revolutions and the class struggle in capitalist states cannot be purely mechanical. There exists a complex dialectical link between the political actions of socialist states internationally and the fight of revolutionary forces within the capitalist world. The mechanism of this link includes a great variety of intermediate links. The development of world socialism exerts an immense influence on the internal social contradictions in capitalist states by increasing their tension, changing and modifying their forms. However, there is no simple functional dependence here by which the change of one magnitude inevitably causes a corresponding increase or decrease in another. The internal contradictions of capitalism have their own objective logic which emanates from the conditions engendered by the capitalist mode of production and the capitalist system. Growth in the world socialist system has its effect on the contradictions of capitalism by refracting them through the prism of internal social and economic conditions of the capitalist system and the national peculiarities of each country. The nature and power of influence of socialism greatly depend on the internal situation within capitalist states. No matter how powerful the external influence, however, it cannot resolve the internal contradictions of capitalism.

Attempts to portray in a simplified and mechanical fashion the dependence of internal revolutionary processes within the capitalist world on the foreign policy of socialism are typical for the ideologists of anti-communism, who maintain that revolution is a result of the export of communism. They thereby ignore the internal causes of social confrontations and they understand revolutions as coming directly from the contradictions and struggle between the two social systems.



Appeals for external intervention and "an all-powerful revolutionary war" are typical also of petty-bourgeois "revolutionaries". The "Left"-wing doctrinaire revolutionaries denied any possibility of a peaceful foreign policy for socialism during the signing of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty in 1918. The Socialist Republic, they asserted, "cannot either *conclude peace* with a bourgeois state or sign a *peace treaty* with it.

"A peace treaty with imperialist states presupposes and immediately involves the establishment with them of so-called friendly relations which exclude revolutionary struggle." The author wrote further that, "in the same way, the Soviet Republic should not conclude any treaties with imperialism. Such a treaty from the external aspect means the recognition by the proletarian government of bourgeois power and introduces into the revolutionary consciousness of the proletariat such disorganisation as participation in bourgeois ministries or support for the idea of defence of the fatherland. . . . Therefore, we should not conclude a peace treaty with German imperialism, nor sign any agreements with it. There remains, evidently, only war."<sup>1</sup> When the peace treaty was, nonetheless, signed, they shouted from the rooftops that "the Russian Revolution had capitulated for the moment to German imperialism."<sup>2</sup>

Vulgar revolutionary notions of socialist foreign policy are also part of the arsenal of Trotskyism. In his criticism of the Programme of the Comintern, Trotsky maintained that socialist construction within national boundaries would lead to a "collaborationist" policy in relation to the capitalist states for the purpose of averting intervention. His followers today continue the same line. Pierre Broué claims that "no less today than in 1918 or 1938, the future of the USSR cannot be separated from the fight to overthrow capitalism on a world scale. In this sense, the prospects for socialist victory in the world are opposed to those of peaceful coexistence."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> V. Obolensky, "K voprosu o voine i mire", *Kommunist* No. 8, 14th March, 1918, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> "Mir ratifikovan", *Kommunist*, No. 10, 17th March, 1918, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> P. Broué, *Le Parti Bolchévique. Histoire du P.C. de l'U.R.S.S.*, Paris, 1963, p. 531.

Petty-bourgeois revolutionaries also harp on a permanent war of the socialist states against the capitalist for resolving the contradictions between them by military means. When Lenin criticised "Left"-wing phrase-mongering, he said that such a policy excludes any possibility of peaceful coexistence and any form of contacts between states with different social systems. In a reference to "Left"-wing Communists, he asked whether they believed that the interests of international revolution prevented peace with the imperialists: "A socialist republic surrounded by imperialist powers could not, from this point of view, conclude any economic treaties, and could not exist at all, without flying to the moon."<sup>1</sup>

Marxist-Leninist theory is totally opposed to the idea of the export of revolution. Socialist revolution in any country is primarily a result of the development of class struggle in that very country. Socialism affects that struggle by the inimitable power of its creative example, by its forward-looking economic, political and cultural progress and by the triumph of Marxist-Leninist science. The attainments of socialism in peaceful competition are creating beneficial conditions for the triumph of the socialist system throughout the world. The monopoly bourgeoisie, however, even when it has completely lost the battle with socialism, will not voluntarily give up the power which ensures it privileges and wealth. Only the working class and the working people of the capitalist states themselves can overturn the power of the bourgeoisie and establish the proletarian dictatorship for a transition to a new system.

### 3. Alliance of Major Revolutionary Forces and the World Socialist System

The Leninist theory of revolution reveals the dialectics of the unity and interaction of the major revolutionary forces today: the world socialist system, the working class in capitalist states and the national liberation movement.

The working class of the imperialist states, the major capitalist countries, plays the main role in the revolutionary process, alongside the revolutionary force of the world social-

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 71.



ist system. The acute crises, which are increasing in frequency in the capitalist states, in which a new powerful upsurge of the labour movement is maturing, bear witness to its mounting revolutionary opportunities.

The rapid growth of state-monopoly capitalism in the circumstances of the scientific and technological revolution is objectively leading the advanced capitalist states to the last stage, beyond which revolutionary change of the whole social, economic and political structure is inevitable. The pressing need for change is being appreciated by more and more sections of the working class. The importance of this for the world revolutionary process is that the advanced capitalist states possess the main industrial potential and the most experienced and politically mature members of the industrial proletariat under capitalism.

Lenin's words on the working class of advanced capitalism and the part it plays in the world revolution show the importance he gave to it: "Our chief hope, our chief support, is the proletariat of the more advanced countries of Western Europe."<sup>1</sup> He roundly criticised the ultra-revolutionaries who underestimated the working class in the advanced capitalist states using the excuse that the workers were too much under the baleful influence of opportunism.

Bourgeois critics frequently distort Lenin's views on this issue. Herbert Marcuse, for example, has maintained that the Leninist theory had reflected the fact that "the revolutionary potential of the industrial working class seemed to recede throughout the advanced capitalist world".<sup>2</sup> Alfred Meyer argues in much the same fashion, that, according to Lenin, "the proletarians of European countries themselves thus turn into exploiters!"<sup>3</sup>

Lenin certainly spoke of the buying off of the "workers' aristocracy" by the bourgeoisie of the imperialist powers. There lay one of the deep social roots of opportunism in the labour movement, which very much hindered the revolutionary movement in the advanced capitalist states and prevented the European proletariat from exploiting the revolutionary

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 348.

<sup>2</sup> H. Marcuse, *Soviet Marxism. A Critical Analysis*, New York, 1958, p. 30.

<sup>3</sup> A. Meyer, *Leninism*, Cambridge, Mass., 1957, p. 245.

situation after the October Revolution. Nonetheless, Lenin was convinced that the opportunist influence over the labour movement would be overcome. He condemned those who, hoping for the awakening of the East, believed that "the revolutionary forces failed to take into account the European and American proletariat."<sup>1</sup>

In taking stock of the difficult tasks of the working class in the more advanced capitalist states, Lenin cautioned against simplistic notions in regard to the approach and transition of these countries to socialism. The "Left"-wingers in the communist movement had demanded a direct assault on capitalism in the European states. At the Second Congress of the Comintern, Amadeo Bordiga said that "a Marxian movement in the Western democratic countries demands much more direct tactics than those which were necessary for the Russian Revolution."<sup>2</sup> He called for "direct revolutionary action"<sup>3</sup> without any delay.

Lenin patiently explained the error of such tactics. In the advanced European states the working class was confronted with great difficulties, it had to deal with a strong, experienced and organised bourgeoisie. The latter could rely on a strong economy which ensures the necessary resources for social manoeuvring. It possessed a well-oiled mechanism of state power and expert means of ideological and psychological influence. These countries had passed through the era of bourgeois revolution. The Marxist parties there, therefore, could not rely on an anti-feudal peasant movement. Most of the workers had been united in trade unions that had traditionally fallen under reformist influence. On this basis, Lenin concluded that socialist revolution in the West would have a difficult journey.

The path to socialist revolution in the strongest citadels of capitalism would involve a patient accumulation of forces for radical revolutionary change and a search for suitable forms by which the common people would arrive at these changes. In following this path, the working class in these advanced capitalist states carries out vital functions in the

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 351.

<sup>2</sup> *The Second Congress of the Communist International*, Report of Proceedings, Moscow, 1920, p. 281.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 282.



world liberation movement. It reduces the freedom of action of the imperialist bourgeoisie, the chief class enemy of social revolution of our time, and facilitates the struggle of the revolutionary forces.

By its revolutionary action, the working class in the advanced capitalist states prepares the way for socialism in the main bastions of capitalism, from where the activity of world reaction emanates and receives its stimulus.

Given the present scientific progress, the level of education and culture of the proletariat has risen, its role in production and society has grown, its range of allies has broadened and its political power has increased. It has extracted through stubborn struggle from the bourgeoisie important gains in regard to its material status and its social rights. With the present world balance of power and rapid scientific progress, the monopoly bourgeoisie would simply not be able to preserve its domination without concessions to the working class whose standard of living is higher now, on the whole, than at the turn of the century, and much higher than in the former colonial areas.

The opponents of Leninism look upon the improvement in the economic position of the proletariat as a reason for its apparent decline in revolutionary fervour. Henry Mayo writes that "nowhere is revolutionary communism less appealing than in the wealthy industrialised countries".<sup>1</sup> The followers of Trotsky totally reject the working class in advanced capitalist states as a revolutionary force. They believe it has become a "workers' aristocracy" *en masse*.

The Trotskyist ideas coincide with the theories of the Maoists who have long dismissed the European and North American working class as a progressive force. Marcuse has similar ideas; he maintains that the working class has become integrated in the capitalist system and has positively taken a conformist stand. As a result, "the reality of the labouring classes in advanced industrial society makes the Marxian 'proletariat' a mythological concept".<sup>2</sup>

All these views lead finally to a rejection of the very possibility of socialist revolution in advanced capitalist states.

<sup>1</sup> H. Mayo, *Introduction to Marxist Theory*, New York, 1960, p. 138.

<sup>2</sup> H. Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, Boston, 1966, p. 189.

This conclusion has been summed up by the French sociologist, Maurice Duverger, as follows: "The proletarian revolution is even less possible there for the reason that there is no longer any revolutionary spirit."<sup>1</sup>

The bourgeois and petty-bourgeois theories proceed from the false thesis that the revolutionary potential of the working class is declining as its living standard is increasing. Of course, the monopoly bourgeoisie strives to use every situation to strengthen reformist prejudices among the people. It uses the improved mass consumption in the advanced capitalist societies, obtained through popular struggle, for the defence of capitalism. Imperialist strategists try to soften the class contradictions of the capitalist system by diverting popular energy into the channel of consumption. Bourgeois propaganda is conducting a massive campaign of spreading the ideology and psychology of consumer society, encouraging individuals to turn their whole social activity to creating a petty philistine world centred on the kitchen, garage and dining-room. The exotic advertising of new commodities is designed spiritually to captivate people, undermine their capacity for struggle, make them slaves of acquisition and, consequently, slaves of the acquisitive society. The relative material sufficiency and consumer welfare are designed to mop up or, at least, to stifle opposition to the capitalist system.

This is the mechanism of the consumer society in which the constant pursuit of commodities becomes as much a sick need as the drug addict's craving for heroine or opium. The partial satisfaction of prime material needs of fairly wide sections of the population, which the bourgeoisie has been forced to concede, is used by the bourgeoisie to shape the structure of consumption in a way that strengthens the capitalist system. The latter-day apologists for this system, using the latest scientific achievements, are striving to form a type of man who would be firmly integrated into the capitalist system through consumption.

The consumer-oriented attitudes and the conformist tendencies that grow up on this basis affect all sections of society and are designed to stifle the ability to put up an active resistance to the capitalist system. Conformism has a mal-

<sup>1</sup> M. Duverger, *Introduction à la politique*, Paris, 1964, p. 371.



odorous influence on art, morality, science and philosophy, on the entire spiritual life of capitalist society.

All the same, experience increasingly proves that the consumer society contains explosive contradictions and that it cannot save capitalism from the vicious circle of insoluble problems; it cannot remove the question of the impending socialist revolution.

Furthermore, even at a high level of industrial development, capitalism shows an inability to satisfy the mounting requirements of the whole population. Even in the richest imperialist states there are extensive areas of poverty and large number of working people without the security of employment—not to mention the plight of people in the ex-colonies.

Consumer society and conformism, engendered by contemporary capitalism, imbue all areas of social life with philistine attitudes and create an overbearing atmosphere of spiritual stagnation. Leonid Brezhnev has said on this issue: "Modern capitalism is a society without ideals, a society without a future. Hence its moral disintegration, spiritual hollowness and stupefying philistinism that is encouraged by a philistine pseudo-culture specially created for this purpose. Hence the monstrous crime wave in the Western countries, the black torrents of drug addiction and pornography, and the sea of perverted feelings and mutilated souls."<sup>1</sup> The consumer society conceals the ideological poverty of capitalism, its antipathy to the lofty ideals and aspirations of all progressive mankind; the consumer society contradicts the content of the contemporary era, the nature of scientific progress and the high rate of cultural progress of mankind. The shoots of new anti-capitalist movements that involve wide sections of the population are appearing on the soil of this conflict. The class actions of the proletariat are, in one way or another, being supported by political actions of non-proletarian strata. Protests by intellectuals, students and even churchmen are symptoms of mass discontent with the hypocrisy, cynicism, soullessness and spiritual bankruptcy of "consumer capitalism".

The experience of the advanced capitalist states once again reinforces the Marxist axiom that the causes of the oppressed

<sup>1</sup> L. I. Brezhnev, *Following Lenin's Course*, p. 297.

position of the working class are to be found primarily in property relations maintained by the power of the political superstructure of bourgeois society. As long as these relations are left intact, experience of life will teach the workers that their relative material sufficiency will not save them from social inequality, lack of confidence in the future and disappointment in life itself. Demands for an equal participation of workers in the social, economic, political and cultural life of society figure prominently in the recent demonstrations by the working class, especially by its leading sections. These protests, as has been mentioned in the Report of the Central Committee of the CPSU to the 24th Party Congress, increasingly are directed not only against individual groups of capitalists but also against the entire system of state-monopoly domination. This is the worker's answer to consumer capitalism.

The upsurge in the labour movement naturally is uneven. Some groups of workers lag behind the rate of growth of the movement as a whole, are delayed at stages already passed by others and are temporarily content with what they have. Hence the fear of more acute forms of class struggle and the one-sided obsession with peaceful and gradual forms of struggle. Hence, also, the avoidance of possible national sacrifice for the common international interests of the working class. Revisionist tendencies within the labour movement feed on just such conservative tendencies. They seize upon such backward notions and turn them into theoretical postulates. Revisionists spread the illusion that it is possible to arrive at socialism within the framework of bourgeois law and bourgeois democracy, without a proletarian dictatorship. They reject the role of the Communist Party in the revolutionary movement and betray the principles of proletarian internationalism, replacing them by parochial national interests. They denigrate the historic importance of socialist experience in the Soviet Union, countering it with a "Western model" of socialism constructed in conformity with the principles of reformist ideology. These revisionist tendencies are a by-product of the transition of the labour movement to the contemporary level of struggle.

As had often happened in the past, the revisionist tendencies will inevitably vanish with a mass advance of the



whole movement to the front line already arrived at by the vanguard. How soon this occurs will greatly depend on the position of the communist vanguard itself and on its ability to lead the labour movement. The leading role of the Communist Party guarantees its revolutionary development. But this role must be won in stubborn struggle for popular support. The people must be convinced by their own experience that the main problem of their emancipation—the problem of property and power—will not be resolved under capitalism and can only be resolved by revolutionary means.

The enemies of Leninism have often tried to distort the Leninist views on the revolutionary potential of the working class under capitalism. Today, the anti-communists, in cahoots with the Right- and "Left"-wing revisionists, ascribe to Leninism a certain unscientific "doctrine of backwardness" according to which the fate of the proletarian social revolution is wholly dependent upon the liberation movement in the East, in the zone of ex-colonies and dependencies, among the poorly developed areas of the world.

In their endeavour to conceal the depth of the antagonism between labour and capital and between socialism and capitalism, bourgeois ideologists maintain that, in the last years of his life, Lenin reappraised the nature and prospects for world revolution, linking its future exclusively with revolution in the East. Robert C. Tucker, Associate Professor of Government at Indiana University, has written in this respect: "Briefly, the epicentre of world revolutionary development was transferred from the industrialised West, where Marx's own Marxism had placed it, to the backward agrarian and colonial, but increasingly rebellious East."<sup>1</sup>

Right-wing opportunists who question the universal validity of Leninist ideas essentially agree with their bourgeois critics. They look upon Leninism only as a theory relating to countries that have not yet attained the high level of capitalist development. They claim that a different interpretation of Marxism is necessary for advanced capitalist states. The result is the same as it is for bourgeois ideologists: Leninism is interpreted as a doctrine of backwardness, as an ideology

<sup>1</sup> R. C. Tucker, "Russia, the West and World Order", *World Politics*, Vol. 12, No. 1, Oct. 1959, p. 6.

for the peasant areas of the world, as a theory of revolution in the East.

The pseudo-Marxists of an ultra-Left, nationalist persuasion also see the main force of world socialist revolution in the petty bourgeoisie of the ex-colonies. One typical feature of their views is their lack of faith in the industrial centres, where the most numerous and powerful, the most experienced and organised sections of the working class are to be found. In other words, they have a lack of faith in the revolutionary potential of the proletariat. That is why they proclaim rural areas to be the only source of revolution.

They back their contention that the countryside is the main base of revolution by references to China, where the rural areas served as support points for the revolutionary forces. Yet they forget that the success of the Chinese revolution depended decisively on the struggle of the Chinese working class and on support from the Soviet Union which rendered invaluable material, military and political aid to the Chinese workers.

Nationalistic views prevent petty-bourgeois revolutionaries from understanding the indirect international ties through which the influence is manifest of the international working class on the mass peasant movements in the ex-colonies and dependencies. With this line of reasoning, the rural areas are taken out of the context of the world-wide struggle of contemporary social forces; they are accorded a decisive place in the development of world revolution as a whole.

In the opinion of "Left"-wing extremists, the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America constitute a "world village" (where for the most part there are no material and social prerequisites for resolving directly socialist tasks) and the centre of social revolution in the 20th century. In effect, the Marxist-Leninist theory of proletarian revolution is replaced by a theory of peasant uprising against the "world town" which, in the interpretation of Maoists, appears as a nationalistic hegemony. They omit from their conception of revolution the fundamental principles of the hegemony of the proletariat in the revolutionary movement, the historic mission of the working class as the liberator of society and the leading role of the world socialist system among contemporary revolutionary forces.



The problems of further development of vast areas of former colonies and dependencies, which are populated predominantly by peasants, are problems of vital importance today. They can only free themselves completely from imperialist fetters, overcome their economic and cultural backwardness and reach a level of contemporary civilisation by an alliance with the major revolutionary forces, i.e., the world socialist system and the international working class.

The "world town" is not simply the stronghold of imperialism, it is also the stronghold of the working class, the most advanced section of all working people; without an alliance with this working class, the problems of the "world village" cannot be resolved. Instead of rising above prejudices, the petty-bourgeois pseudo-socialists promote them to the rank of theory and preach backwardness as a symbol of revolutionary fervour. While claiming to ennoble the national liberation movement, petty-bourgeois revolutionaries in fact denigrate it by counterposing it to the international working class and the world socialist system. Proletarian internationalism is thereby replaced by bourgeois nationalism and great-power chauvinism.

The Leninist doctrine of the world revolutionary process is imbued with the ideas of proletarian internationalism; it precludes any exclusiveness or counterposing of geographical areas, continents or zones. In opposition to local and narrow nationalistic approaches, Lenin proposed a policy of broad alliance of the anti-imperialist forces grouped around the working class. But the theory which arbitrarily promotes continents embattled in national liberation to the centre of world revolution is at variance with these Leninist criteria. It has much in common with Trotskyism; it was the Trotskyists who maintained that the centre of the revolutionary movement would move entirely to the East. The proletariat of the advanced capitalist states is relegated to the background and its revolutionary potential put to doubt.

These theories are similar to the concepts which absolutise events associated with the disintegration of colonialism. By the logic of the advocates of such an approach, the denial to capitalism of markets and raw materials in the liberated states constitutes the main, if not the only, path for the downfall of capitalism. Moreover, the separation of the Third

World from the imperialist centres will evidently result in some sort of strangulation of the bourgeois system. A characteristic feature of this type of thought is the attempt to counterpose certain revolutionary forces to others, to ascribe revolutionary potential exclusively to the unfortunate masses of the former colonies. Such theorists maintain that the chief conflict today is between the rich and poor nations, the "world town" and the "world village". They ignore the international proletariat and the world struggle between socialism and capitalism.

In the wake of bourgeois theories, "Left"-wing and Right-wing opportunism ultimately have much in common. In this instance, they are similar in that they ignore the decisive role of world socialism in the social progress of mankind and the revolutionary potential of the working class in the industrially advanced countries.

Lenin spoke out in a determined fashion against one-sided views which hypertrophied the importance of the East in world revolution.

In the minutes of the Committee on National and Colonial Issues at the Second Comintern Congress, we read the speech of the Indian delegate, Rau, who was defending the notion that "the fate of the revolutionary movement in Europe wholly depends on the course of revolution in the East... Without the triumph of revolution in Eastern states, the communist movement in the West can be reduced to naught. World capitalism is getting its main resources and income in the colonies, largely in Asia. If the worst comes to the worst, the European capitalists can give the workers the entire surplus value and attract them to their side, having killed their revolutionary aspirations. The capitalists themselves will continue to exploit Asia with the help of the proletariat... In view of this, it is necessary to redirect our energy to develop and raise the revolutionary movement in the East and to adopt as our basic thesis that the fate of world communism depends on the triumph of communism in the East".<sup>1</sup>

In his reply to Rau, Lenin said: "Comrade Rau is going

<sup>1</sup> *Vestnik vtorogo kongressa Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala*, No. 1, 27th July, 1920, p. 2.



too far when he maintains that the fate of the West depends exclusively on the degree of development and power of the revolutionary movement in Eastern states. Despite the fact that India has five million proletarians and 37 million landless peasants, Indian Communists have not managed to date to create a communist party in the country; for this reason alone, the views of Comrade Rau are largely unfounded."<sup>1</sup>

In warning against one-sided and incorrect judgements on the role of the national liberation movement, Lenin at the same time saw in it a vital factor in the world socialist revolution. He considered the liberation movement of the peoples in the colonies and dependencies as one of the main motive forces of the world revolutionary process.

Lenin first gave full importance to the international significance of the popular struggle for national liberation in the era of impending world socialist revolution. The ideologists in the Second International did not show any interest in the national liberation movement, believing that it had nothing in common with the proletarian socialist movement. At the Third Comintern Congress, Lenin said that the social democratic leaders had ignored the radical changes in the national movement in the new era. He was first to show that in the epoch of imperialism this movement ceased to be a purely regional issue.

In the era of imperialism, the colonies became a source of that super-profit with which the monopoly bourgeoisie tried to defuse the social contradictions in the metropolitan countries. By destroying the colonial flanks of imperialism, the national liberation movement became a natural ally of the international proletariat. As Lenin put it, "world imperialism shall fall when the revolutionary onslaught of the exploited and oppressed workers in each country, overcoming resistance from petty-bourgeois elements and the influence of the small upper crust of labour aristocrats, merges with the revolutionary onslaught of hundreds of millions of people who have hitherto stood beyond the pale of history, and have been regarded merely as the object of history."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Vestnik vtorogo kongressa Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala*, No. 1, 27th July, 1920, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 232.

He closely associated the prospects of impending successes for the national liberation movement with the international proletarian movement and the battle of Soviet Russia against imperialism. In his analysis of the social and political forces for national liberation in the colonies and dependencies, Lenin took up a class position and underlined that the main revolutionary force there was the petty bourgeoisie, the peasants. Their involvement in the revolutionary process was a factor of immense importance. The spontaneity of the movement and its petty-bourgeois character, however, presented acutely the problem of proletarian leadership and influence. It has to be remembered that the proletariat is small and weak in these areas; hence the prime importance of an alliance of the peoples fighting for national liberation with the international working class and the Soviet Union. In an address to communist organisations of the East, Lenin said: "You must find specific forms for this alliance of the foremost proletarians of the world with the labouring and exploited masses of the East whose conditions are in many cases medieval."<sup>1</sup>

The Leninist policy of an alliance between the forces of socialism, the international working class and national liberation movement helped to uncover the inexhaustible potential of revolutionary vigour of oppressed peoples. They could not have attained such impressive results in their struggle without the support and direct aid of the world socialist system.

All the outstanding victories of the peoples of the ex-colonies and dependencies, the prospects for their future growth, their liberation from economic fetters and the prospects of a national renaissance are all contingent upon an alliance with the world socialist system.

The emergence of the world socialist system and the radical change in the world balance of power weakened imperialism and prevented it from putting up an effective resistance to the loss of its colonial flanks. The socialist states defended the national liberation movement from the onslaught of international counter-revolution. Any counterposing, therefore, of the national liberation movement to the

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 30, p. 161.



socialist states objectively adds grist to the mill of the ideologists of neo-colonialism, who do all they can to sow discord in the world liberation movement and suspicion of the socialist states among the liberated nations. Anti-communists assert that Communists are trying to exploit the national liberation movements without account for their real interests and needs. The British writer, Brian Crozier, has written that Communists "support these movements and these struggles for what they can get out of them".<sup>1</sup> In fact, the alliance of the labour and national liberation movements is reinforced by a community of vital interests of the two movements. Both develop as two streams of a single world revolutionary process, clearing the way both for the national and social liberation of mankind. These two tasks are objectively connected, and one cannot be resolved without the other. That is why Lenin saw in the national liberation movement a potential force for struggle to affirm socialism throughout the world.

The realisation of the social opportunities for national liberation revolutions, however, depends to a very great extent on the overall state of the world revolutionary process and, consequently, on the activity of all its main forces, including the working class in the advanced capitalist countries. This is palpably obvious today, when the national liberation movement in many liberated states is becoming a struggle for social emancipation. The change from tackling problems concerned with getting rid of colonial domination to more creative problems is associated with the overcoming of numerous difficulties that stem from the immaturity of social and economic conditions. In tackling these problems, the advanced forces of national liberation need more than ever the help and support of all revolutionary forces.

Today, an objective basis exists for firm unity of the world socialist system, the working class of capitalist states and the national liberation movement. They have a common enemy in imperialism and their fight against this enemy brings them together. The activity of each of them objectively encourages success for the others. They can all attain their ultimate goals only on the road to communism, only as a result of the universal victory of social revolution.

<sup>1</sup> B. Crozier, *The Struggle for the Third World*, London, 1966, p. 24.

Of course, an alliance of the main forces of world revolution is not attained simply by them joining together. Each section of the world liberation movement has its own specific features and functions. To coordinate their actions is a relatively new and difficult matter. It is necessary to overcome any differences of opinion that may arise on the basis of common vital interests of all the sections. Historical experience again and again shows that unity harbours a guarantee of success for the whole world revolutionary movement and for each section separately. The above-mentioned 1969 International Meeting stated that "*it is of paramount importance for the prospects of the anti-imperialist struggle to strengthen the alliance between the socialist system, the forces of the working-class movement and national liberation.*"<sup>1</sup>

#### 4. World Social Revolution and Its Mounting Opportunities

The proletarian social revolution is full of drama. There has never been another era in which events have unfolded so rapidly.

In his estimation of the complexity and the dynamism of the world socialist revolution, Lenin remarked that "the progress of the revolution cannot be foretold",<sup>2</sup> that there are no time-tables which could show exactly where and when it would take place or how exactly it would develop. Nonetheless, it has certain basic tendencies that reflect the main content and direction of events in the revolutionary era. The world revolutionary process passes through certain qualitative stages; its main tendency, as defined by Lenin, is that one sees the turning of "the dictatorship of the proletariat from a national dictatorship (i.e., existing in a single country and incapable of determining world politics) into an international one (i.e., a dictatorship of the proletariat involving at least several advanced countries, and capable of exercising a decisive influence upon world politics as a whole)."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow 1969*, p. 30.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 481.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 31, p. 148.



The October Revolution set in motion processes which underpinned a far-reaching shift in the balance of world social forces. The main feature of the change is the growth in the forces of socialism and democracy, their consolidation in the struggle against imperialism and its reactionary tendencies, and the gradual isolation of imperialist circles.

The qualitative changes resulting from this development were already clearly apparent in the 1930's. A united popular front of the broad democratic and socialist forces began to form in the anti-fascist campaign. The Seventh World Congress of the Communist International gave an overall evaluation of the contemporary events: "The victory of socialism, having transformed the USSR into a force which sets in motion wide sections of the population, classes, nations, peoples and states, marks a new *great change in the relation of class forces on a world scale in favour of socialism, to the detriment of capitalism; it marks the beginning of a new stage in the development of the world proletarian revolution.*"<sup>1</sup>

The defeat of fascism in World War II, the victory of socialist revolution in several states, the emergence of the world socialist system, its strengthening and development, and the scope of the general democratic and national liberation movement led to such radical changes that created a completely new situation in the world.

The new alignment of world social forces testifies that imperialism has forfeited for ever its dominating position in the world and that the international working class, relying on the world socialist system, an alliance with the national liberation and democratic movement, today acts as the leader of the world liberation movement. It is capable, as Lenin had foreseen, of exerting a decisive influence on all world politics. New and propitious opportunities have consequently opened up to the revolutionary movement.

Lenin once said: "We began our revolution in unusually difficult conditions, such as no other workers' revolution in the world will ever have to face."<sup>2</sup> His forecast has been

<sup>1</sup> *Seventh World Congress of the Communist International. Resolutions and Decisions*, Moscow, 1935, pp. 54-55.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 137.

completely borne out. The preponderance of forces on the side of socialism has created a situation in the world that is more favourable to the revolutionary forces. The international working class, relying on positions already won, can today force the bourgeoisie to fight in new areas.

The world liberation movement now has the possibility of attacking imperialism in all main directions. The realisation of these possibilities very much depends on the initiative and militant activity of the revolutionary forces themselves.

The 1969 Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties mapped out a political programme of joint anti-imperialist actions by revolutionary forces. Realistically determining the basic common tasks for all these forces in contending with imperialism, it aimed at the creation of prerequisites for a powerful turn of the world revolutionary process and universal attainment of the ultimate goals of the labour movement.

Important changes that enable revolutionary actions to take effect have occurred both at the centre of the capitalist world and in its former colonial territories.

The development of the world revolutionary movement and its principal consequence—the emergence of a communist socio-economic formation—were bound to affect deeply contemporary capitalism and the entire mechanism of its vital activity. The rapid growth in state-monopoly control and the intensification of scientific progress are not simply a result of objective demands of the contemporary forces of production; they are the reaction of capitalism to the world revolutionary process. In trying to accommodate itself with the situation created by the progress of the proletarian social revolution, capitalism is changing and it is altering the conditions of struggle for socialism in the capitalist states.

State-monopoly capitalism is giving the bourgeoisie more flexible means of defending the capitalist system yet, at the same time, sharply intensifying the basic contradiction of capitalism. The high degree of socialisation of production has brought society to the brink beyond which socialist change is inevitable. In addition to former contradictions, new ones arise to affect all sections of the population. They include, above all, the contradiction between the vast opportunities



presented by scientific progress and the hindrances which capitalism puts in the way of their utilisation for the sake of the whole of society and every person. Growth in the contradiction between labour and capital is accompanied by an increasing antagonism between the interests of the overwhelming majority of the nation and those of the finance oligarchy.

The contradictions of state-monopoly capitalism separate the monopolists from the rest of the population, serve as the basis for a mighty upsurge of the general democratic movement which is objectively shaking the capitalist system to its very foundations. The working class and the peasants are joined in this movement by such social strata as the engineers and technologists, the white-collar workers, the urban petty bourgeoisie and the students. The worker-peasant alliance is augmented by the alliance of manual and mental workers. Anti-pathetic attitudes to capitalism also affect groups of civil servants engaged in culture, politics and ideology. This mood in many capitalist states infects the armed forces whose service men are especially affected by the introduction of new technology and who, therefore, have become more educated and cultured, displaying an increasing interest in political issues.

The demand for radical changes penetrates into all the pores of capitalist society and facilitates an approach and transition to a fight for socialism through far-reaching democratic changes which have completely matured in the economy and meet the interests of the vast majority of the population and can, thereby, today become a sort of bridge to socialist revolution. An increasingly widening coalition of anti-monopoly forces is forming around the working class in advanced capitalist states; it is capable of implementing profound democratic reforms which would create conditions favourable for the struggle for socialism.

The social base of the mass movement for radical social and economic change in the advanced capitalist states is widening, political tension is increasing, mass discontent is growing with imperialist policy and crises of national dimension are occurring in many different places. All this presents heightened demands for hegemony of the revolutionary movement by the working class and, primarily, by its po-

litically organised sections. Unity of the labour movement acquires prime importance in these circumstances.

The development of world revolution in a Leninist way creates more favourable conditions for healing the split in the labour movement. When he exposed the social democrats and reformists at a decisive stage of history, Lenin, along with the Bolsheviks, led the labour movement along a path leading to the re-establishment of working-class unity in the fight for democracy and socialism.

Half a century of experience enables us to sum up the results of the activity of the two trends in the labour movement. To the credit of the revolutionary trend, led by Communists, is the triumph of socialism in several countries and the creation of the world socialist system. The results of the activity of the reformist trend are well-known: in no West European state where socialists have been in power for many years (Britain, Belgium, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, etc.), have they been able to alter the nature of the social system. Social-democratic and Labour governments have come and gone, while capitalist regimes and exploitation of hired labour have remained without serious change. These facts are an indication of the futility and hopelessness of the ideology and programme of the social-reformists. That is why the social-democratic movement is experiencing a swing to the Left and Left-wingers are looking for other means of struggle.

Contemporary social democrats are at the crossroads. On the one hand, during half a century of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie, they have won themselves a fairly firm foothold in the system of state-monopoly capital. Their party apparatus and its "labour bureaucracy" operate in the "set" direction: they fulfil the function of defending the capitalist regime from revolution. On the other hand, the increasing possibilities of the fight for socialism and the inclusion in this struggle of increasingly wide sections of the public, including people who support the social-democratic parties, are leading to a radicalisation of the mass basis for social democracy and putting great pressure on the leadership from below. The demand is becoming more and more insistent for a revision of the traditional programme of fighting for reforms so as to lend it an anti-monopoly character.



The document adopted at the 1969 International Meeting noted that a differentiation was occurring in the ranks of the social democrats and this was affecting the positions of their leaders. Some of them were serving the interests of monopoly capital; others were inclined to take account of popular demands in the struggle for peace and social progress. History has presented the social democrats with a dilemma: either they break completely with the labour movement and become a run-of-the-mill bourgeois party, or they return to the working class, which demands a decisive rupture with the policy of class collaboration.

The more favourable opportunities, forms and modes of transition to socialism created by the growth in world revolution are encouraging the progressive evolution of part of the social democrats in a direction of moving towards the revolutionary wing of the labour movement and towards the Communists.

The deep-going changes taking place in the world are intensifying the trend towards labour unity. The old Comintern leader, Georgi Dimitrov, referred to this trend in a speech to the Seventh Comintern Congress when he said that "there is a reactionary camp of Social-Democracy, but alongside of it there exists and is growing the camp of the Left Social-Democrats".<sup>1</sup> He pointed out that the international labour movement was entering a period when the division would be healed. At that time, the trend had not become fully apparent. Today, this trend has become much stronger. Nonetheless, this does not remove the profound ideological differences of opinion between Communists and socialists. As before, the socialist parties continue to hold reformist positions and the ideological struggle between them and revolutionaries in the labour movement continues. But the developing world socialist revolution will widen the base for unity of the labour movement even more.

The radical change in the world balance of power and the mounting prestige of socialism are increasingly affecting the line-up of classes, social groups and political organisations in the capitalist world. As a result, situations and opportu-

<sup>1</sup> G. Dimitrov, *The United Front. The Struggle Against Fascism and War*, London, 1938, p. 73.

nities often arise which could hardly have been imagined earlier. The revolutionary process in Latin America is a good example; in recent years one has seen a swift radicalisation of social forces, which in the past had been passive, even conservative.

With socialism becoming a decisive factor in modern history, the hegemony of the international labour movement in world revolution has greatly increased the possibilities for the development of peoples free from colonial despotism. Lenin called upon Communists to ponder over pacts with the petty bourgeoisie "exclusively in the sense of the forms of transition to socialism on the part of *different* sections of the petty-bourgeoisie".<sup>1</sup> Today, this problem is much more an international one. "It is a question," said Leonid Brezhnev in 1969, "of consolidating the alliance of the whole international working class with the peasantry, with all the working people of the young liberated countries."<sup>2</sup> Thanks to this alliance today, as Lenin had forecast, it is possible "to inspire in the masses an urge for independent political thinking and independent political action, even where a proletariat is practically non-existent."<sup>3</sup>

By virtue of support from the world socialist system, the liberated countries have gained a real possibility of independently determining their own destiny. A historical situation has developed which enables these countries, which so far do not have the material, social and political conditions for a direct transition to socialist change, to implement a number of transitional measures: to set up state enterprises, restrict the private capitalist sector, control foreign capital, plan economic development and form agricultural co-operatives. These measures are not yet socialist in character, but they gradually create objective conditions for a transfer to building socialism, which are prepared by capitalist development in advanced states. When one recalls that most liberated states have a tiny proletariat which does not occupy

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, p. 43.

<sup>2</sup> *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow 1969*, p. 154.

<sup>3</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 242.



leading positions in politics, it is extremely difficult to maintain a stable socialist orientation through all the transitional stages of development. All the same, several countries have carried out and are carrying out, perhaps not always consistently, non-capitalist measures. They are carrying them out under the leadership of revolutionary democrats backed by Communists.

The leading part played by revolutionary democrats at certain levels of the world liberation movement has become possible due to the overall leadership of this movement by the international proletariat and the world socialist system. By their example and support, they are helping the democratic petty-bourgeois sections of the economically backward countries to break the chains of their spiritual and political dependence on the imperialist bourgeoisie and to play an independent role in history, following the international proletariat in a single stream of world revolution. The revolutionary democrats employ the rich experience of the class struggle of the proletariat, the experience of socialist revolutions.

They are being convinced in practice that, only by relying on the party that is the organised revolutionary vanguard of the people and that expresses the interests of the working people, is it possible to reinforce national autonomy, defend it from imperialist and reactionary attacks and carry out real socialist measures. If such a party is absent or if it is politically, organisationally and ideologically weak, there is a danger of conservative or even reactionary forces winning power, which strive for an alliance with imperialism and capitalist development within the liberated states.

The revolutionary democratic parties fight for their ideological, political and organisational strengthening, and employ in their programmes, forms of organisation and activity much of the experience of the revolutionary proletarian parties, which in itself testifies to the international political authority of the working class. Despite the social differences, the elements of inconsistency, irresolution and compromise, the revolutionary democratic parties do have the potential, in view of the growth in size and influence of the working class, for evolving into parties of socialist revolution built and operating on the basis of Marxist-Leninist principles.

The progressive evolution of revolutionary democrats greatly depends on their relationships with the Communists. As Leonid Brezhnev said at the 24th Party Congress, co-operation between the revolutionary democrats and communist parties "fully meets the interests of the anti-imperialist movement, the strengthening of national independence and the cause of social progress".<sup>1</sup>

Today, the progress of the liberated states is by no means easy. The immaturity of the social and economic structure, and the political instability associated with it, are exploited by conservative and reactionary forces within these countries and imperialist forces from outside to organise intrigues and subversive activity against revolution. There is also a tendency towards conservative and even reactionary attitudes in the behaviour of democratic groups, especially the petty bourgeoisie, alongside the strong revolutionary and progressive tendencies. On the whole, they are more radical than they were in the past. Nonetheless, they still have an inherent dual class nature. Furthermore, the petty-bourgeois strata in liberated states which have an immature social structure possess an unusually motley and heterogeneous character which only goes even more to intensify the multiplicity of political tendencies within it. All this lays its imprint up on the position taken by revolutionary democrats, serves as a source of internal contradiction which often becomes antagonistic, causes vacillations ranging from sheer anti-communism to unjustified radicalism. The dissimilar class nature of national democratic parties is also reflected in the conduct of their leaders. Some do not always show sufficient political vision and put the interests of their personal glory above state interests. At times, these deficiencies in revolutionary democrats bring them to acute internal political crises and this, naturally, hampers non-capitalist development and sometimes puts at risk the attainments of the national liberation revolution.

The fight to use the opportunities open to the national liberation revolutions today has a complex history, and traverses contradictions, retreats and zig-zags due to the weakness of forces fighting for a socialist orientation in their

<sup>1</sup> 24th Congress of the CPSU, p. 28.



development. Nonetheless, the very fact of the emergence of a new direction for the liberated states is historically significant. The further course of world revolution, strengthening of real socialism and the accumulation by the petty-bourgeois masses of experience in struggle will create increasingly favourable conditions for an advance of the liberated states to socialism.

The immense progress of the world socialist revolution of the proletariat over the last 50 years has strengthened the position of the revolutionary forces and created conditions for their further success internationally, in the capitalist states and in the newly free countries. Whether the possibilities are realised greatly depends on the vanguard political force of world revolution—the communist movement, on its ability to unify the revolutionary forces around it, to spot impending dangers in time, to weigh up soberly the correlation of forces in a particular area, to find the most effective forms of struggle and boldly and firmly to maintain a revolutionary political line.

#### 5. Communists as the Militant Vanguard of Proletarian World Revolution

The fate of social revolution in this century is closely linked with the communist movement. It is this movement that most fully and from a Marxist-Leninist position reflects the paramount aims and prospects for development of the world socialist revolution. It acts as the political vanguard of the international working class and is the main moving force of contemporary history.

The historic initiative for socialist revolution came from the communist movement. The working-class party of a new type, the Bolshevik Party, formed by Lenin, became the first modern proletarian party of revolution. It was first to lead the working class to victory and it showed in practice how socialist revolution could be achieved.

When the objective conditions for revolution had matured in the imperialist era, the social democrats, who had earlier been the chief political power in the labour movement, had not been able to maintain class internationalist positions.

They had resorted to compromise and became a brake on socialist revolution. At the decisive historical moment, the communist movement, represented by the Leninist party, hoisted the flag of proletarian internationalism and revolution. The Communists took the labour movement along the path of revolutionary struggle. In setting up the Comintern, its initiators fortified their gains and recorded on paper what had been firmly asserted in people's minds. Lenin wrote: "Everyone knew, and what is more, everyone saw, felt, sensed, each from his own country's experience, that a new proletarian movement was in full swing. Everyone realised that this unprecedentedly strong and deep-going movement cannot be confined to any of the old frameworks."<sup>1</sup>

In the decades that have passed since October 1917, the communist movement has recorded wonderful victories. Socialist revolutions have occurred in a whole group of countries scattered over different continents. Each victory has confirmed the vanguard role of the communist movement in the world revolutionary process. The experience of social development has shown quite clearly that the communist movement is a powerful catalyst of the revolutionary energy of the working class and all working people. All the really vital changes that have occurred in the world are closely connected with the activity of Communists; without them the changes could not have taken place.

In the advanced capitalist states, communist parties are the chief political force that stands opposed to monopoly domination. During the black years of fascism and reaction, the Communists were in the front rank of the fighters for democracy. The lives of thousands upon thousands of Communists were given for the cause of defeating fascism. Victory over fascism opened up new possibilities for the struggle for democracy and socialism. Today the communist parties of the capitalist states are conducting fierce struggles to realise these possibilities and defend the interests of the revolutionary labour movement. Without their participation or support, a stable Left-wing policy directed against monopoly omnipotence would be impossible. Their programmes provide a real prospect for approaching and arriving at socialism.

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 479.



The communist parties have also played an outstanding part in the national liberation revolutions. They are today in the forefront of the battle and search for progressive development in the newly free states. The socialist bias of the revolutionary movement in these countries is indissolubly linked with communist activity.

To sum up the impact of the international communist movement on world history, one may say that it has become a paramount political factor in world socialist revolution which has transformed the social face of the globe, had the profoundest influence literally on all events of contemporary history and has shown mankind the way out of the impasse into which capitalism had led it. Leonid Brezhnev has said: "The historical experience of many countries, the experience of the class struggle has given convincing evidence of how necessary the activity of the communist parties is for mankind and how fruitful this activity is for social development. Guided by Marxist-Leninist theory, the communist parties show the peoples the road to the communist future. They rally the peoples to the struggle and steadfastly march in the van of the mass movements for the great goals of social progress. Communists are always in the front rank of the fighters for the vital rights of the working people, for peace. They carry high the invincible banner of the socialist revolution."<sup>1</sup>

The contemporary world is replete with parties that criticise capitalism. There is no political party or political trend apart from the Communists, however, which is capable of answering the question of what a social structure should be that corresponds to the level of social and economic progress that mankind has reached. The communist movement is the only political force which has in practice opened the doors to mankind's future. The socialist system, created under communist guidance, has demonstrated that it can resolve the problems posed by present history. The attainments of socialism provide the prospects for world revolution, augment its insuperable power directed against imperialism and capitalism, a power of creativity and initiative, and affirm in

<sup>1</sup> *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow 1969*, p. 155.

practice the positive values and ideals of the liberation struggle. At the same time, socialist attainments strengthen the basis of the world revolutionary movement because the socialist system is the decisive force in the anti-imperialist struggle.

The communist movement is part and parcel of the class that holds the centre of the contemporary stage—i.e., the international working class. Being the supreme form of political organisation of the most advanced class, communist parties are destined to pursue a consistent revolutionary policy in the anti-imperialist struggle, to act as its vanguard.

By its nature, the communist movement is profoundly international; there has never been in history another political trend which has had the ability to exceed the bounds of national exclusiveness. Only the world communist movement, throughout its history and activity, has affirmed proletarian internationalism and proved its ability to defend the common interests of the working class irrespective of its national affinity. The very emergence of the contemporary international communist movement was an act of regeneration of the traditions of proletarian internationalism, trampled upon by the leaders of the social democrats, who wallowed in reformism, nationalism and social chauvinism. This was an act of real patriotism because it gave every people and every nation a clear-cut programme of national and social liberation, a programme of active participation in human progress. Communists maintain and develop this tradition of the unity of international and national interests in the class struggle of the proletariat. "Each Communist Party is responsible for its activity to its own working class and people and, at the same time, to the international working class. The national and international responsibilities of each Communist and Workers' Party are indivisible. Marxists-Leninists are both patriots and internationalists; they reject both national narrow-mindedness and the negation or underestimation of national interests and the striving for hegemony."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.



Today, the forms of international ties of the communist parties have become more complex. Each party is autonomous and determines its own policy independently. At the same time, the national influence and status of any party are measured not only by its own possibilities, but also by the state of the entire world communist movement. It operates as an integral movement linked by ties of class solidarity and the community of its international mission. Consequently, the communist movement is a world-wide factor of progress and fulfils the unifying role within the world anti-imperialist struggle. For that reason, the sphere of proletarian internationalism is expanding and embracing other social movements and groups, unifying them around the international working class.

The communist movement, which has already accumulated the greatest experience of revolutionary world transformation and possesses a scientific, Marxist-Leninist philosophy has the most responsible historic task of working out radical principles of tactics and strategy in anti-imperialist struggle. The communist movement objectively functions as the natural centre of attraction for all the strands of the world liberation movement. The political ideas, principles and even methods of struggle elaborated by Communists are, in one way or another, accepted by many democratic parties, organisations and forces which converge in a common front of struggle, alongside the Communists, against imperialism. Even in the capitalist states where communist parties are comparatively small and weak, they indirectly influence the attitudes of all other political forces, who are obliged to take account of them as the most revolutionary anti-imperialist trend in the labour movement.

The communist movement is strong in the knowledge of its historic mission, its lofty moral and political duty to mankind. No political trend now or ever possessed such an understanding of the extent of historic responsibility upon it. Basing themselves on a Leninist evaluation of the role of historic initiative in social development, Communists fight stubbornly to realise the opportunities opening up for the present generation. The communist movement is the most active force among other political forces in the world revolutionary movement.

At the dawn of proletarian revolution, innumerable social groups and strata which did not have practical experience or clear understanding of socialism sometimes went against their own interests by siding against socialist revolution or, otherwise, took up passive wait-and-see positions. Today, the experience of socialism has become their property too. Consequently, they appreciate their genuine interests with increasing clarity and join the revolutionary movement on the side of the working class more and more actively. It is to the supreme merit of the communist movement that it has inspired initiative and energy of vast sections of the population to join the world-wide historic struggle for the triumph of socialism.

The world communist movement is fulfilling a great historic mission in the social revolution of today. It is taking upon itself great pledges to the working class, to socialism and to all humanity. "The policy of joint anti-imperialist action demands that the ideological and political role of the Marxist-Leninist Parties in the world revolutionary process should be enhanced."<sup>1</sup> Only the communist movement is capable of showing the way to all anti-imperialist forces and successfully discharging its function of uniting them.

The unprecedented scope of world revolution and the range of tasks confronting the communist movement naturally present greater demands on it. The communist movement is growing and developing, experiencing the impact of new conditions and new problems which it has to solve.

Above all, it is being affected by the growing complexity of the social composition of anti-imperialist forces and the involvement in the struggle of broad semi-proletarian and petty-bourgeois urban and rural people. The ranks of many communist parties are being filled by such people and this has increased social differentiation within the movement. This is an indication of the enhanced political influence of Communists both within the working class and within other categories of the population. It is an indication of the recognition of their vanguard role in the world liberation movement.

<sup>1</sup> *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow 1969*, p. 38.



At the same time, however, the entry of non-proletarian elements into communist parties has increased the danger of various types of revisionist and nationalist trends. Lenin noted that if one takes a practical view of the labour movement, it is quite clear that the attraction of more and more recruits and the involvement of new sections of working people must inevitably be accompanied by vacillations in theory and tactics, the repetition of old mistakes and a temporary return to outmoded views and methods: "The labour movement of every country periodically spends a varying amount of energy, attention and time on the 'training' of recruits."<sup>1</sup> The total mass of recruits that has come into the communist movement since the war cannot be compared with the past. Understandably, the expenditure of energy, attention and time needed for training this mass is infinitely greater than it was in the past.

The great expansion of the social composition of mass forces taking part in the struggle for socialism has brought certain changes in the position of petty-bourgeois parties. Many of them today not only favour socialism but, under pressure from their members, show an ability to take a practical part in forms of struggle which objectively bring socialism closer. Left-wing tendencies in some socialist and social-democratic parties have increased.

The part played by revolutionary democratic forces that adhere to a socialist orientation has grown in the liberated states. In many capitalist countries, numerous, often amorphous, Left-wing political tendencies have arisen which express the interests of radical students and intellectuals.

All this means that the basis for political alliances between Communists and other parties and organisations is widening and they can make a positive contribution to the fight for democracy and socialism. The communist movement must be able to combine its class principles with tactical flexibility in arranging contacts and cooperation with these political parties and trends and find suitable forms of interaction with them.

Communists now have the task of finding ways of implementing their vanguard role in a complex and not always

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 16, p. 348.

clearly defined web of political forces that take part in the anti-imperialist struggle, which would enable them to maximise the unity of these forces and to coordinate their policy with that of the revolutionary proletariat as the basis and binding force of a broad democratic alliance. The ability to resolve this task is becoming a major criterion of the ability of a Marxist-Leninist party to lead politically the mass revolutionary struggle for socialism.

Differentiation in the forms and directions of the world revolutionary process is also seriously affecting the communist movement. The conditions of activity of individual parties have today become much more diverse. Some parties are leading the struggle for building socialism and communism, while others are fighting at the centre of the capitalist world against monopoly power, and yet others are vigorously participating in national liberation revolutions. Every country, even in one and the same area of the world, has its own specific tasks peculiar to itself. The multiplicity of conditions of activity of different communist parties is bringing about a situation where specific practical and political experience is far from the same for each of them. All this complicates a correct solution to the problem of combining international and national tasks in their activity.

The natural desire of each party to strengthen and extend its influence as a national political power demands a careful account of the specific conditions of the particular country or region of the world. To combine this desire harmoniously with resolution of the international task common to the whole communist movement is not easy in the present multifarious world. The considerable differences in experience which exist alongside the main, common factors that unite Communists in a single army of socialist revolution make it possible to overestimate a party's own experience in determining the tasks for the entire communist movement. This creates a danger of a narrow national approach to proletarian internationalism and even the appearance of various forms of nationalist or isolationist tendencies.

The opportunities that have opened up today to the world revolution also pose complex tasks to the communist movement. The realisation of these possibilities is accompanied by the creative development of the theory, strategy and tactics



of the international communist movement, by overcoming dogmatic and conservative trends and by fighting against revisionism that tries to use the new situation as a pretext for revising the main principles of Marxism-Leninism. The fast rate of revolutionary change demands from each communist party and the movement as a whole firm resolution in defending the common and sacrosanct principles of Marxism-Leninism, an extremely dynamic attitude in theoretically evaluating the new possibilities and finding ways and means of operating which would correspond to the swiftly changing political situation.

Today, social revolution has entered a responsible phase when the prospects for its future triumph are being clearly etched. At the same time, the tenseness of the struggle is growing between the working class and democratic forces, on the one hand, and the monopoly bourgeoisie and imperialism, on the other. A polarisation of the forces of progress and reaction is taking place. All the chief sections of the world revolutionary movement are advancing to new stages from which wide horizons open up for a victorious battle against imperialism. This development is associated with overcoming difficulties and contradictions that are reflected in the state of the political vanguard of anti-imperialist struggle—i.e., the world communist movement.

Anti-communists have been trying to capitalise on these difficulties by proclaiming a crisis and even a disintegration of the communist movement.

Their ideas, however, are refuted by life today, which convincingly proves the irresistible vitality and political potency of the international communist movement. The International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties that took place in 1969 dealt a crushing blow to anti-communist speculation. It demonstrated quite clearly that the communist movement is loyal to the principles and traditions of proletarian internationalism and is quite able to overcome any difficulties that stand in its way. As the Meeting put it, "Communists are aware that our movement, while scoring great historical victories in the course of its development, has recently encountered serious difficulties. Communists are convinced, however, that these difficulties will be overcome. This belief is based on the fact that the international work-

ing class has common long-term objectives and interests, on the striving of each party to find a solution to existing problems which would meet both national and international interests and the Communists' revolutionary mission; it is based on the will of Communists for cohesion on an international scale".<sup>1</sup>

The temporary nature of revisionist and nationalist trends in certain parts of the communist movement and the centrifugal forces that have arisen on the soil of nationalism, petty-bourgeois revolutionism and Right-wing opportunism is becoming more evident with each passing year. They are a side-product of the growth in the communist movement, a cost of its transition to a higher phase of development and a higher level of fulfilling its vanguard role in the world revolutionary process. One clear indication of this was the International Meeting in 1969, which replied to certain vitally important questions of anti-imperialist struggle. In the face of the forecasts of anti-communists, it demonstrated that Communists are equal to the demands of the present stage of the world revolution and that they are the centre for unifying the anti-imperialist forces.

Leonid Brezhnev, in his report at the Meeting, set out a realistic programme of practical measures aimed at overcoming the differences in the communist movement. They included the following:

- (i) joint actions against imperialism that bring together Communists of all countries and help to give a true evaluation of the different views;
- (ii) a comprehensive extension of ties and contacts between the fraternal parties, the elaboration of a mechanism for coordinating their actions and comparing their positions;
- (iii) a summing up of the theoretical work of the different parties, improvement of the ways and means of joint work, exchange of information, study of mutual experience, arrangement of a regular exchange of opinion, including international conferences.

The 24th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was another important stage in uniting the world

<sup>1</sup> *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow 1969*, pp. 37-38.



communist movement. The very fact that as many as 79 communist parties attended the Congress, more than were at the 1969 Meeting, testifies to the growing unity of communist ranks, and the wide recognition of the Soviet Communist Party's role in the fight for that unity. In following up the policy of the 1969 Meeting, the 24th Congress tackled the question of the indissoluble link between the political and ideological unity of Communists. The effectiveness of political unity or joint action by fraternal parties very much depends on community of views on basic ideological problems. In turn, the path to ideological unity lies through practical struggle and unity of action by the parties. That is why the Congress proposed a double task: "To achieve even greater political cohesion of the communist movement and its ideological Marxist-Leninist unity."<sup>1</sup>

The problem of unity of the communist movement is extremely important. The forms of international unity of the parties are historic and depend on specific conditions.

New forms of international unity have been worked out today: they are formulated in the Declaration of the 1960 Meeting and were further developed in the Document of the 1969 Meeting. The principles of proletarian internationalism, solidarity and mutual assistance, respect for independence and equal rights, non-interference in each other's internal affairs are the basis of mutual relations between Marxist-Leninist parties. The natural forms of cooperation include bilateral consultations, regional meetings and international conferences. Coordination of action by the parties in the interests of successfully resolving immediate tasks is typical of the present form of international unity, which excludes a directing centre.

The development of new forms of international unity, however, is not a simple question of a political theory and programme. It is a question of practice. Setting the standards of mutual relations between parties is a much more complex affair in reality than their recognition in policy documents. It demands both a break with conservative notions and an exposure of revisionist attempts, alongside outmoded forms, to bury the very international unity of the communist parties.

<sup>1</sup> 24th Congress of the CPSU, p. 216.

Overcoming the differences that have arisen in the communist movement is, therefore, associated with an ideological struggle against Right- and "Left"-wing opportunism and nationalistic attitudes. None of this, however, removes the root requirement for unity, which stems from a community of class interests of the whole communist movement and from its position in the world revolutionary process.

This deep-going need for international unity is inspiring the Marxist-Leninist parties to use all their great energy and tenacity to strengthen unity of the international communist movement and consolidate its vanguard positions in the world revolutionary process. Therein lies the guarantee of the ultimate triumph of the proletarian social revolution throughout the world.



## IMPERIALISM TODAY AND THE GROWING PREREQUISITES FOR SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

### 1. A Leninist Analysis of Imperialism and the Contemporary World

Marx and Engels had investigated the inner workings of capitalism with scrupulous precision and had given a comprehensive analysis of the major antagonism between the social character of production under capitalism and the private appropriation of its results—an antagonism whose development would inevitably lead to the downfall of capitalism and to socialist revolution.

They pinpointed the objective basis for the chief class contradiction of the bourgeois system, that between labour and capital, and revealed the historic mission of the proletariat which was to overthrow, by revolution, the capitalist regimes and build a new society.

Ever since then, bourgeois and reformist writers have attempted to refute the revolutionary conclusions of Marxist theory and to prove that capitalism is capable of coping with its contradictions and that revolution is not inevitable. They usually speculate on factors connected with new economic and political events under capitalism, yet falsify their true substance and meaning.

To defend and creatively develop the revolutionary principles of their philosophy in accordance with new experience Marxists have to pay prime attention to an analysis of new capitalist economic and political factors, new forms of operation of the laws of the capitalist system, and the vagaries of capitalism's contradictions. A study of these new capitalist processes is particularly important at turning points in history.

Just such a point occurred at the turn of the century. The developing concentration and centralisation of capital led to a qualitative change in the capitalist mode of production.

Many features of capitalism had begun, as Lenin wrote, to turn into their opposites; a transition had taken place from free competition to monopolies. Capitalism had entered the highest stage of its development, the imperialist stage.

Lenin gave very close attention to the characteristics of the economic structure of capitalism at the new stage and the character of the change in its superstructure; in so doing, he developed and enriched the revolutionary philosophy of Marx and Engels. "The result of Lenin's economic research over many years was the creation of a coherent theory of imperialism as the highest and final stage of capitalism. Marx's economic teaching was raised to a new stage."<sup>1</sup>

This comprehensive analysis of monopoly capitalism enabled Lenin to determine the immense opportunities for revolutionary advance that were opening up in the new era, and to work out a theory of world socialist revolution that corresponded to the new situation.

The history of monopoly capitalism has shown the exactness of Lenin's description of its main economic characteristics. The processes which constitute the economic basis of monopoly-capital politics include the following: growing domination of monopolies, merging of industrial capital and bank capital and subordination of all social affairs to the finance oligarchy, export of capital, fierce struggle of the monopolies and states representing their interests for the division and redivision of markets and raw material sources, spheres of capital investment and struggle for the territorial repartition of the world.

Lenin indicated that the transition to monopolies and, especially, the development of state monopoly capitalism signified the internal undermining of the foundations of capitalism: "... Monopoly, which grows out of capitalism, is *already* dying capitalism, the beginning of its transition to socialism."<sup>2</sup> At the same time, Lenin realised that the entry of capitalism into the monopoly stage meant a sharp increase

<sup>1</sup> L. I. Brezhnev, *Following Lenin's Course*, p. 258.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, p. 107.



in the exploiting features of the bourgeois system, and in oppression and arbitrary rule by the monopoly bourgeoisie; this made the revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist system an insistent demand.

Lenin wrote: "The epoch of capitalist imperialism is one of ripe and rotten-ripe capitalism, which is about to collapse, and which is mature enough to make way for socialism."<sup>1</sup> He also stressed that "the 'proximity' of *such* capitalism to socialism should serve genuine representatives of the proletariat as an argument proving the proximity, facility, feasibility and urgency of the socialist revolution, and not at all as an argument for tolerating the repudiation of such a revolution and the efforts to make capitalism look more attractive, something which all reformists are trying to do."<sup>2</sup>

Lenin emphasised the growth in elements of planning associated with the development of monopolies, but felt that the most important aspect of imperialism was the mixture of contradictory features—monopolies and competition: "...it is this that is making for the final crash, i.e., the socialist revolution."<sup>3</sup> He pointed out that the trusts could not provide complete planning, although they "produce commodities not anarchically but according to a plan",<sup>4</sup> and therefore the crises remained. He often made the point that the transition to monopolies entailed an extension of the range of the predatory squandering of the forces of production and an increase in economic instability.

Lenin analysed the whole conglomeration of facts about the fundamentals of economic affairs of the contemporary world and the entire system of states in their economic and political relations; on this basis, he concluded that the transition to imperialism would invariably lead to a fierce struggle between nationally-exclusive groups of capitalists for a repartition of a divided world, that the era of relatively smooth development and "peaceful" capitalism in the second part of the 19th century "has given way to an epoch which is relatively much more violent, spasmodic, disastrous and con-

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 109.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 25, p. 443.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 24, p. 465.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 26, p. 160; Vol. 25, p. 443.

flicting".<sup>1</sup> Lenin wrote that imperialism engendered devastating world wars which brought untold calamity to the working people and threatened to destroy the very foundations of human society.

In his analysis of the political superstructure of bourgeois society in the imperialist era, Lenin came to the conclusion that it showed a turn from democracy to political reaction and a deepening conflict between the masses striving for democracy and finance capital with its denial of democracy.

Social development has proved conclusively the correctness of Lenin's definition of imperialism as parasitic, decaying and moribund capitalism, which has become a great brake on human progress and a calamity for all mankind.

He irrefutably showed that both the exacerbation of all contradictions immanent in capitalism and the increasingly intensive creation of material conditions for socialism and their "maturation" within bourgeois society made imperialism the highest and last stage of capitalism, the eve of socialist revolution. From a study of the development of imperialism's international structure, and the character of its uneven development due to the domination of the monopolies, he came to a conclusion of great import: socialist revolution cannot triumph simultaneously in all countries, it can only triumph and will triumph initially in a few or even in a single country, not necessarily the most economically developed, but one which represents the weakest link in the world imperialist chain.

No scientific forecast of social relations has ever been tested and confirmed so swiftly and precisely as this Leninist analysis of monopoly capitalism. Only a few months had passed and the Great October Socialist Revolution inaugurated the era of the abolition of capitalism and the transition to socialism throughout the world.

Over half a century has passed since then and history has been extremely eventful.

The "organising capacity" of capitalism, which imperialist apologists have sung the praises of, has been shaken by economic crises hitherto unknown in capitalist history, including the worst crisis in the history of bourgeois society—

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 22, p. 104.



the world economic crisis of 1929-1933. Capitalist planning has turned out to be, as Lenin emphasised, the planned increased exploitation of the working people in more refined, but no less onerous, forms than before. Imperialism has by no means become "peaceful" ultra-imperialism. It has twice pitched humanity into the unprecedented bloodshed of world war and has threatened humanity with a thermonuclear catastrophe in whose furnace hundreds upon hundreds of millions of people would be consumed. Capitalism that is becoming "democratic" (on the assertion of opportunists) has appeared as barbarous fascist dictatorship of finance capital whose evil deeds make the cruellest tyrannies of the past pale by comparison. One has seen also the monstrous decimation of social resources by unproductive military expenditure in a number of capitalist states, which to all intents and purposes have become "military garrisons".

L. I. Brezhnev has said: "It is enough to glance at the world we live in today to become convinced how accurate were Lenin's socio-political analysis and his forecasts based on this analysis, and how fully life has borne out their correctness in all essential features."<sup>1</sup>

The Leninist theory of imperialism is being developed by the joint efforts of the fraternal communist and workers' parties. The International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties that took place in Moscow in June 1969 made a valuable contribution. As was noted in the CPSU Central Committee Report to the 24th Party Congress, the Meeting did much to promote a number of propositions of Marxist-Leninist theory on the contemporary world.

The Meeting stated that contemporary capitalism possessed certain new features and new forms of contradictions. There were considerable changes in the way its laws operated. The decisive feature of this process, however, were not so much the changes connected with the internal conditions of capitalist existence as the profound changes of an international nature brought about by the advance of revolutionary forces. The communist and workers' parties, loyal to Leninism, comprehensively analysed all these changes and defined the new problems and new possibilities forming for

<sup>1</sup> L. I. Brezhnev, *Following Lenin's Course*, p. 286.

the international working class and its allies; they exposed the new versions of theories by the apologists for imperialism. The documents and decisions of the 24th CPSU Congress were also a fresh valuable contribution to Marxist-Leninist theory. The Congress summed up the results of the theoretical work undertaken by the CPSU which centered on the analysis of new phenomena in contemporary capitalism, the paths and forms of influence of world socialism on the non-socialist part of the world, a study of new processes in the capitalist economy under the impact of scientific and technological progress.

The International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties asserted that imperialism remained a serious and dangerous opponent. It had at its disposal, the Meeting warned, a highly developed apparatus of production and a powerful military machine. The monopoly bourgeoisie displayed no mean craft in mobilising the reserves that still remained in the bourgeois system.

L. I. Brezhnev said at the 24th CPSU Congress: "We Communists are well aware that there is no room for passivity or self-complacency. The fighters against capitalist oppression are confronted by the last but the most powerful of the exploiting systems that have ever existed. That is why a long and hard struggle still lies ahead."<sup>1</sup> Imperialism, however, is powerless to regain the historical initiative it has lost, to turn back the clock of history.

The many diverse features of contemporary capitalist development stem from the contradictory interrelationship of three basic processes, which are evoking frenzied attempts by capitalism to adapt itself to the new world situation.

Firstly, there is the great debilitation of imperialism's world positions and the deepening of its general crisis as a world system: "...Adaptation to the new conditions does not mean that capitalism has been stabilised as a system. *The general crisis of capitalism has continued to deepen.*"<sup>2</sup>

Imperialism has been deprived of its economic and political hegemony in the world. It is operating in a situation where the formation and mounting strength of the world

<sup>1</sup> 24th Congress of the CPSU, p. 22.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.



socialist system, the downfall of colonial regimes and the pressure of the labour and democratic movement are transforming the face of the world with unprecedented speed. That imperialism can no longer determine the course of world social development is no longer denied even by representatives of the stronghold of imperialism—American monopoly capital. The late American President, Lyndon B. Johnson, once said: "Neither our nuclear power nor our great wealth can force events into a mould of our making."<sup>1</sup>

*Secondly*, the new world situation is characterised by the ongoing scientific and technological revolution and the concomitant accelerated growth of the forces of production in the imperialist centres.

*Thirdly*, there is the evolution of capitalist relations of production, which is primarily expressed in the intensification of its state-monopoly character. The employment of various devices for state regulation of the economy has become a "permanent institution" of capitalism. It is being implemented on the basis of an increasingly extensive grafting of the monopolies on to the state and the coordination of their forces in a single mechanism.

What is the interrelationship and the historical trend of these processes? How do they affect the nature and development of capitalist contradictions? How do they influence the political attitudes of the public? Answers to these questions are immensely important for determining the problems that confront the anti-imperialist forces, and their present possibilities and prospects for the further development of the world socialist revolution.

The enemies of revolutionary thought speculate on the extreme contradictoriness of the new phenomena and endeavour to rehabilitate theories refuted by Leninism. A renovated version of "apology for imperialism" has appeared.

One group of bourgeois and reformist writers laud the "miraculous role" of state-monopoly regulation. These representatives of the "etatist" philosophy are particularly enamoured of the changes in the forms of cyclical development, a diminution in the depth and duration of depressions.

<sup>1</sup> *Reader's Digest*, February 1969, p. 223.

State intervention is portrayed as a factor radically transforming capitalism and defusing the contradictions.

The "technological" school has also achieved a certain notoriety in recent years; its proponents (Walt Rostow, Leonard Silk and Daniel Bell in the USA, and Jean Fourastié in France) take the scientific and technological revolution as the central point in their concepts, so that technological change is, according to Bell, "an independent variable",<sup>1</sup> that decisive external force which, unexpectedly, has entered the historical arena, infused capitalism with fresh blood and saved it from the state of decay it was in during the 1930's, and has given it a second youth.

Some representatives of this school even concur with the Marxist notion that the prime mover of social development is shifts in the forces of production and, above all, changes in the instruments of production. However, they vulgarise and distort the notion by maintaining that scientific progress automatically transforms social and economic relations, precluding the need for class struggle and revolution.

A more fashionable thesis is that of "industrial society", propounded notably in the writings of John Galbraith and Robert Aron; it represents a synthesis of "etatist" and "technological" schools. In Galbraith's opinion, for example, contemporary capitalism is a smoothly functioning integral system in which state regulation is harmoniously combined with the internal planning of autonomous production units—"mature corporations", which have fused with the state. In this system, the idea of "greatest possible profit" has given way to the stimulus of "technological advance" and "expansion of output".<sup>2</sup>

The above-mentioned schools of contemporary bourgeois writings are united in their desire to play down the fact of the depression and crisis of the world position of capitalism. The capitalist economic processes are regarded in isolation from the struggle between the two systems; the bourgeois writings take a one-sided and hypertrophied view of events associated with accelerated scientific progress and

<sup>1</sup> H. Kahn, A. J. Wiener, *The Year 2000. A Framework for Speculation on the Next Thirty-Three Years*, New York, 1970, p. XXIII.

<sup>2</sup> J. K. Galbraith, *The New Industrial State*, Boston, 1967, pp. 110-11, 398.



economic advance. Their theme is the assertion that capitalism has been able to heal the maladies from which it suffered prior to the last war and that it has entered a period of new prosperity.

Theories have also become widespread in recent years which have either denied the changes within the capitalist economy or reduced them to purely transient phenomena with no substance. The American economists, Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy, deny, for example, the essentially novel economic role of the bourgeois state today and the Leninist idea of state-monopoly capitalism.<sup>1</sup> American industrial growth is explained exclusively by the action of "external stimuli": military expenditures and "epoch-making innovations". Stagnation, they maintain, is the "normal state" of capitalism.<sup>2</sup>

The most characteristic feature of contemporary imperialist apologetics is their treatment of phenomena of post-war economic growth isolatedly from the entire complex of problems of world development, the reduction of these phenomena exclusively to the operation of internal forces of capitalism and to the alleged discovery of an inner potential of the bourgeois system that had previously, before the war, been submerged. This is the basis for the idea that capitalism has entered a new era of prosperity; bourgeois science tries to counterpose this idea to the Marxist-Leninist doctrine of the deepening general crisis of capitalism and the conclusion made by the international communist movement that socialism, and not capitalism, is the decisive force of world social development in the present era.

The question of the correlation and interaction of capitalist internal laws and the external factors affecting their development is a key methodological problem in studying contemporary capitalism.

Is it possible to analyse capitalism as a closed system? Can one say that its development as a whole is fully determined today by the same laws that operated in the past and determined the whole course of its earlier development, when

<sup>1</sup> P. A. Baran, P. M. Sweezy, *Monopoly Capital. An Essay on the American Economic and Social Order*, New York and London, 1966, pp. 66-67.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108.

there was no powerful socialist system? Or should one treat capitalism as a competing party in the historic confrontation of the two systems and see how the methods of capitalist economy are changing under the impact of this struggle, how the economic laws inherent in capitalism are acquiring new forms and becoming intertwined with factors which are being engendered by the world revolutionary process?

Marx, in studying the key elements in the development of social capital, deliberately abstracted himself from the influence on capitalism of non-capitalist forms. This was logically necessary for it enabled him to examine the process in a "pure form" and thereby pinpoint the main laws. At that time, it was the only correct historical method: although pre-capitalist relations of production were continuing to play an immense part on an international scale, it was capitalism that determined the course of development and was establishing its world domination.

Nonetheless, Marx and Engels never absolutised the economic laws inherent in capitalism; they carefully noted how their operation was modified under the influence of various factors, including the struggle of anti-capitalist forces. They attacked the Lassallean concept of the "iron law" of wages which treated the trend to general capitalist accumulation in a vulgar fashion. They showed the role that the labour movement was to play in "modifying" the action of capitalism's basic law of surplus value and, in particular, in changing the relationship of absolute and relative surplus value. Marx studied how, in certain circumstances, the labour movement could be a factor that would stimulate the capitalist economy. For example, he carefully analysed the influence that the campaign of the British workers for a 10-hour day had on economic processes in Britain and how it encouraged technological progress in industry.<sup>1</sup>

Methodological conditions for an analysis of the effect which anti-capitalist factors and, above all, the class struggle of the proletariat exert on the capitalist economy and the actual forms of the development of its laws are inscribed in the works of Marx, Engels and Lenin.

Capitalism is a system that is founded on exploitation of

<sup>1</sup> See K. Marx, *Capital*, Volume I, Moscow, 1972, pp. 279-80.



the proletariat. The contradiction between labour and capital is the main internal contradiction of capitalism; the class struggle of the proletariat is inherent in capitalism. In that sense, the proletarian class struggle is the decisive internal factor of capitalist development. But there is another side to the coin. The working class, being an organic part of the capitalist system is, at the same time, alienated from it. This system stands opposed to it as an external alien force. Objectively, the proletariat is an irreconcilable foe of capitalism and its grave-digger. The class struggle of the proletariat, therefore, is an external factor in regard to capitalism and has the potential of turning the internal contradiction between labour and capital into a contradiction of a wider scope—the contradiction between socialism and capitalism on a world scale. The triumph of socialist revolution makes this process real.

Given the struggle between the two systems, the proletarian class struggle in the capitalist world has remained a vital internal factor of capitalist development and, at the same time, is an inalienable part of such an "external" (in relation to imperialism) factor as the progress of world socialism and all anti-imperialist forces.

The fact that socialism has become the decisive factor of social development has sharply increased the effect of the struggle between the two systems both on the policy and on the economy of capitalism. The 1969 Meeting highlighted this aspect when describing the new features of imperialism. "Many important features of modern imperialism," L. I. Brezhnev said, "can be explained by the fact that it is compelled to adapt itself to new conditions, to the conditions of struggle between the two systems."<sup>1</sup>

The Leninist thesis of two trends in imperialist development provides a key to understanding what is seemingly a paradox of the accelerated economic growth of capitalism when it is suffering an unparalleled decline in world status.

The vulgar and facile notions that capitalism may disintegrate automatically due to the stagnation of forces of pro-

<sup>1</sup> *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow 1969*, p. 141.

duction and the transition to a narrowed reproduction are inconsistent with Leninism. The combination, under imperialism, of monopoly and of competition leads to an intertwining of the two tendencies. One tendency is towards stagnation and acts as a brake on technological progress which, as Lenin stressed, is inherent in any monopoly under private ownership of the means of production. The other tendency, associated with competition, is towards an extraordinarily rapid development of capitalism in certain countries for certain periods of time.<sup>1</sup>

Lenin considered the "compatibility", the intertwining of decay and rapid growth a characteristic feature of capitalism. He wrote that decay does not preclude the rapid growth of capitalism in certain countries and branches of industry for certain periods of time.<sup>2</sup> By the example of the USA, the most advanced and most swiftly developing state at the beginning of the 20th century, Lenin emphasised that it was precisely due to the swift development that the parasitical features of capitalism were particularly manifest.<sup>3</sup>

The alternate strengthening of the tendencies to decay or to growth is readily apparent in contemporary capitalism. In the USA, for example, the first trend was clearly predominant in the sluggish 1950's, and was then followed by the second trend.

The fact that, as a whole, the post-war period has seen a heightened trend towards growth of forces of production in imperialist states should not be explained, as bourgeois economists do, by a spontaneous awakening of capitalism's hidden potential. This fact cannot be explained by looking at contemporary capitalism in isolation from the course of world development. That is why just as untenable are the assertions concerning the so-called Keynesian revolution which allegedly turned the bourgeois state into a "demiurg" of the economy. Some even think that a magical transformation of capitalism has occurred under the influence of scientific and technological innovation which seems to have come like a bolt from the blue.

<sup>1</sup> See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 104.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 300.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*



Imperialism has lost its political and economic monopoly in the world; an international competition has developed which puts in question not the level of profit, nor the dimensions of the spheres of influence of certain nationally-exclusive imperialisms, but the very existence of world capitalism as a whole. All this is bound to influence the correlation of trends towards decay and growth, with encouragement of the latter trend. The expansion and consolidation of socialism in the world economy and policy are a decisive and far-reaching factor and the main internal cause of the changes taking place throughout the world.

Bourgeois propagandists like to frighten people with recounting the number of victims, losses and destruction which revolution brings. Yet it is indisputable that *a key part in the world history of the last few decades is being played precisely by the creative opportunities uncovered by the new social system born in October 1917 and the subsequent socialist revolutions in other parts of the world.* These opportunities have been realised despite the truly massive list of victims, losses and destruction which the new society had to bear from the attempts by international reactionaries to stifle revolution and take their revenge.

The decline in imperialist international status has been particularly marked in recent decades. Very deep changes have taken place in the world economy. Experience has fully borne out Lenin's forecast that "expropriation of the capitalists will inevitably result in an enormous development of the productive forces of human society."<sup>1</sup>

The post-war alternation of periods of depression and relatively high rates of economic development in individual imperialist states has encouraged bourgeois ideologists and revisionists to put about legends concerning capitalism's "economic miracle". Granted, the miracle seems to appear in different countries at different times. It has flitted from the USA to West Germany and, more recently, to other Common Market states. After the sharp drop in economic growth rates in West Germany and other EEC countries, bourgeois propagandists switched to the "Japanese miracle" as an illustration of the dynamism of capitalism.

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 468.

One should not underestimate the importance of these spasmodic changes in the relationship between the various economies within the imperialist camp; nor can one turn a blind eye to increased economic efficiency and industrial growth rates. But in examining the processes in a broad historical plane, it turns out that no economic "miracles" of capitalism can alter the general trend towards decline of its world economic status.

Quantitative indices of the economic struggle between the two systems are not the only important factors. The scientific and technological revolution gives special significance to qualitative indices of production and scientific progress and the application of its attainments.

The growing economic potential and political and military might of socialism is the most important new condition in the world situation to which imperialism is having to accommodate itself. This accommodation is most obvious in the relocation of the centre of gravity of imperialist politics. Before the appearance of the world socialist system, the main motive force of this imperialist policy was the fight of "nationally-exclusive imperialisms" to repartition the world and lord it over the world capitalist economy. Now the main element in imperialist policy is to offset the onslaught of socialism and other anti-imperialist forces; hence the strong tendency towards unity of imperialist forces and of the international bourgeoisie in an attempt to avert the downfall of the old order.

For the first time in history, the principal sections of international reaction are grouped in a single system of military and political blocs and pacts. "Under conditions where the struggle between the two world systems is becoming sharper, the capitalist powers seek, despite the growing contradictions dividing them, to unite their efforts to uphold and strengthen the system of exploitation and oppression and regain the positions they have lost."<sup>1</sup>

Imperialism is using up vast resources on military means for combating socialism. Present-day capitalism has far exceeded all its former "attainments" in the size of its military

<sup>1</sup> *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow 1969*, p. 12.



machine and the degree of militarisation of its economy. The unprecedented scope of imperialist militarism makes a decisive problem of the revolutionary struggle the question of the defence capabilities of socialism, the balance of military potential and economic and technical power between the two world systems. Faced with the fact that to launch a nuclear-missile war against world socialism would be suicide, the monopoly capitalists of the USA and their allies now plan a protracted campaign of economic and ideological struggle.

Contemporary opportunists speculate on the temporarily increased rate of industrial growth and scientific progress in the leading capitalist states and their increased planning; they endeavour to prove that capitalism is not on the way out, that its contradictions are unimportant and that the revolutionary overthrow of bourgeois regimes is no longer necessary, because revolution is incompatible with modern industrial society.

In this situation, a social and political evaluation of the new economic phenomena acquires particular importance. Can we evaluate the technological and economic changes taking place under capitalism as signs of its peaceful transformation—or as factors representing an objective basis for a heightened revolutionary struggle to overthrow capitalism?

The main deficiency of the various concepts that focus on the increasing state role and the economic growth of capitalism is that they deliberately ignore the main factor—i.e., that each step that capitalism takes signifies the reproduction of its contradictions on an extended basis and the further maturation of material, social and political conditions for a revolutionary transition to a new society.

## 2. Scientific Progress and Worsening Capitalist Contradictions

The scientific and technological revolution has been playing a vital part in world economic development since the 1950's. Tremendous qualitative changes are taking place in all major spheres of production. But the historic importance of contemporary scientific and technological progress is not confined to such changes in science and technology, even in

all of production; it embraces changes in the interrelationship between science and technology and social and economic spheres.

The extremely important fact is, first, that the quantitative increase in the role of science and technological progress in the development of production and all social life, which has been going on for a long time in a geometrical progression, today possesses a *new quality*. Economic growth and an increase in the productivity of social labour today depend immensely on application of scientific and technical knowledge. The uneven increase in the role of science and technology goes far beyond the framework of production. The link between scientific progress and the world policy and international relations has greatly intensified.

Second, the scientific and technological revolution is taking place at a time when capitalism no longer has a monopoly of scientific and technical development and when socialism is advancing to the forefront in a number of decisive spheres of scientific progress. While previous production revolutions over several centuries were exclusively a form of development of productive forces of bourgeois society, their main locomotive being the internal forces of capitalist production, a different situation has now developed. Today, the scientific revolution is becoming a decisive area of the socialist-capitalist world confrontation; this fact is exerting immense influence both on the rate of scientific development and on the entire process of production in the capitalist world.

Imperialist ideologists interpret the postwar scientific and technological revolution to suit their own purposes. Galbraith, for example, maintains that the power of capital and the pursuit of profit are becoming an anachronism existing outside the bounds of the new industrial system, while the system which is represented by "mature corporations" is dominated not by capital but by an "educational and scientific estate" which has become a decisive factor of production ensuring its planned development.

The proponents of the idea of the new industrial society ignore the vital point that the very development of scientific research and, especially, the employment of its results in production decisively depend on social and economic factors.



Scientific development has never occurred independently of changes in the social relations of production. The founders of Marxism frequently emphasised this aspect in noting both the dependence of scientific progress on the requirements of technology and also the link between technological progress and the operation of social and economic factors. Technological progress is affected in no small way by capitalist competition in the pursuit of super-profits, especially the rivalry of monopoly groups in world markets. Today, however, a new force—that of world socialism—is operating alongside these factors.

When the conflict between labour and capital went far beyond the bounds of individual countries and grew into a global confrontation between socialism and capitalism, invention and technical innovation became organised on a state scale, implemented in a planned way at the expense of the state; monopoly capital did this in response to the scientific and technological challenge of the new social system.

The imperialists are trying to speed up scientific progress. State expenditure on research and development in the USA from 1940 to 1969 increased 220 times (from \$70 million to \$15,600 million). The greatest increase in this expenditure (\$9,500 million) was registered after the launching of the first Soviet satellite in 1957.<sup>1</sup>

The 1969 Meeting noted that state-monopoly capitalism utilised science and technology on a wide scale as a decisive weapon in the economic, political and military struggle between the two world systems.<sup>2</sup>

The dependence, stressed by the founders of Marxism, of scientific development on technological needs and the dependence of technological development on social, economic and political factors is greatly increasing. Modern-day science demands tremendous resources for its development. The lion's share has to come from the state budget of the capitalist countries and is given not from logical requirements of internal development of science, but with specific social and political aims of monopoly capital in view. It is the im-

<sup>1</sup> See *Izvestiya Akademii Nauk SSSR, seriya ekonomicheskaya*, No. 2, 1971, p. 138.

<sup>2</sup> *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow 1969*, p. 221.

perialist interests that are the main stimulus for monopoly measures intended to expand the bounds of application of modern technology; these bounds are set by the internal factors of capitalist reproduction, the rate of profit and the monopoly-fixed price system.

At the same time, an extension of the bounds of application of the latest technology has occurred under the influence of the labour movement. The concessions wrested from the bourgeoisie by the proletariat are stimulating the process of renovation of basic capital and the employment of new technology.

This is taking place both indirectly, through an expansion of the consumer market, which in its turn is causing a growth in sectors producing means of production, and directly at enterprises. Manpower is becoming more expensive and this is forcing the capitalists to make more extensive use of technological methods and machines, thereby economising on human labour. The bourgeoisie, therefore, is trying to compensate for the higher cost of manpower by attaching wages to higher productivity and often higher intensity of work. Normally, a programme of technological re-equipment follows any wage rise. The 24th CPSU Congress noted that "the monopolies have been making extensive use of scientific and technical achievements to fortify their positions, to enhance the efficiency and accelerate the pace of production, and to intensify the exploitation and oppression of the working people."<sup>1</sup>

Scientific progress has had an immense influence on capitalist production. The postwar period has seen major changes in the structure of industry and the economy as a whole, accelerated development of such technologically progressive sectors as chemistry and radioelectronics. An increasing share of the end product is being accounted for by new commodities whose appearance is connected with latest technological developments.

Accelerated technological progress in turn speeds up the renewal of basic capital, because constant application of more productive and more economically effective technological methods makes it obsolescent much faster. Rapid technological

<sup>1</sup> *24th Congress of the CPSU*, p. 20.



re-equipment has embraced not only industry and transport, but agriculture and many service spheres, too.

All these processes have resulted in increased demand for instruments of production and corresponding raw materials, have led to a growth in capital investment and rate of accumulation, have encouraged a higher economic growth-rate and a huge increase in the socialisation of production in capitalist states.

In its Theses on the Lenin centenary, the CPSU Central Committee stated that "capitalism is using the achievements of the scientific and technological revolution and is relying on the powerful, highly organised production mechanism to mobilise, with the help of the state, all resources on a national scale, accelerate economic growth rates, and maintain the comparatively high efficiency of production."<sup>1</sup>

In speeding up scientific and technological progress, the monopoly bourgeoisie is trying to shore up capitalism, but the results turn out ultimately to be just the opposite. The scientific and technological revolution is intensifying the major contradictions of bourgeois society and increasing the objective need for it to be overthrown by revolution.

The capitalist reconstruction of production in line with scientific progress is exacerbating the basic antagonism of the bourgeois system—that between the growing socialisation of production and the private capitalist form of appropriation. Lenin wrote: "Capitalist technology is increasingly, day by day, *outgrowing* the social conditions which condemn the working people to wage slavery."<sup>2</sup> The achievements of the human genius, embodied in contemporary inventions, are, under capitalism, turning into a means of extending the scope of the arbitrary rule of monopoly groups, strengthening their oppression and swelling the conglomerates created by "the geni of financial business deals".

Monopoly capital has managed to reach a high level of surplus-value rate as a result of postwar economic development. This means not simply a vast increase in the degree of exploitation of the working class, but also the appropria-

<sup>1</sup> *On the Centenary of the Birth of V. I. Lenin*, pp. 38-39.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 19, p. 62.

tion by monopoly cliques of the fruits of scientific progress and growth in the efficiency of social production.

Only the largest companies now possess sufficient financial resources to develop and introduce the latest types of produce and the methods of their mass production. They control gigantic resources, allocated by the state for these purposes. The degree of concentration of research and development in private capitalist industrial companies has greatly increased.

The economic growth inspired by the loss of international domination and the increasing state control of production has raised the rule of finance capital to a new stage: the monopolies are developing into super-monopolies, as the following facts illustrate.

1. While, at the turn of the century, monopoly socialisation was mainly in heavy industry, it involves today all branches of production, vast areas of the agro-industrial complex and a large share of services. Small capitalist firms have either been forced out of the key industries to services and repairs (motor-car workshops, television and other household goods' repair shops, etc.), or have become sub-contractors, completely dependent on the main companies, and deliver parts.

2. The level of monopoly concentration of production is rapidly increasing in all the major imperialist states.

3. The degree of concentration of capital is growing at an unprecedentedly rapid rate.

The share of the largest 500 industrial corporations in the USA has increased greatly: their sales were recently almost 64 per cent of the total sales in American industry, while their share in profits had increased to 74.4 per cent.<sup>1</sup> The turnover of the 10 largest American industrial corporations has reached some \$95 thousand million (exceeding the national income of Britain by 10 per cent, of West Germany and Japan by 20 per cent, and of Italy by 100 per cent). However impressive these figures are, one should not forget that the scope of concentration of capital in the hands of a few US finance groups is even greater as, too, is their control over industry, trade and banking. Big business is becoming

<sup>1</sup> *Mirovaya ekonomika i mezhdunarodniye otnosheniya*, No. 2, 1970, p. 122.



bigger. Second generation cartels are arising combining not individual enterprises but vast trusts and concerns.

4. Centralisation of capital is also on an unprecedented scale. "Mergers boom" is a characteristic feature of the present stage; the accumulations of the most profitable companies are being used for a mass buying-up of the less fortunate firms. "The United States," Gus Hall said at the 1969 Meeting, "and also some of the other industrially developed countries, is at the height of a totally unprecedented avalanche, a frenzy of corporate mergers. . . . It is the merging of the giants into super-giants."<sup>1</sup> According to official statistics, the number of mergers in the United States was 2,384 in 1967, 4,462 in 1968, 6,107 in 1969 and 5,173 in 1970.<sup>2</sup> The picture is similar in other areas of the imperialist industrial zone. The British *Financial Times* has written that "throughout Europe the structure of industry is changing. The number of mergers and co-operative associations between companies announced during the last year to 18 months has been so great that it has been described as gigantomania."<sup>3</sup>

The new wave of centralisation of capital is multiplying the number of monopoly associations of the conglomerate type, which involve production units of the most diverse sectors often with no production or market ties with one another. The creation of conglomerates lends finance capital new forms and causes a further merging of the banks and industry, which some Western writers have described as "non-existent". Baran and Sweezy, for example, have written that the conception of the "interest group" was obsolete.<sup>4</sup>

The biggest monopoly groups, in forming conglomerates from firms of very different sectors and concentrating increasingly large financial resources in their hands, depend less on bank credit than before and less on new issues of shares.

<sup>1</sup> *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow 1969*, p. 132.

<sup>2</sup> See *Business Week*, N.Y., August 15, 1970, p. 86; *24 Ore*, Milano, 7 January, 1971.

<sup>3</sup> *The Financial Times*, Dec. 7, 1968, p. 12.

<sup>4</sup> P. Baran, P. Sweezy, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

This does not signify, however, the division of finance capital into component parts; it means the development of a new type of industrial and financial groups in which, within the bounds of one and the same firm, the functions of industrial capital organically merges with some functions of bank capital.

The previous forms of joint control over industry and the banks in the hands of the finance oligarchy—the system of participation, personal union and long-term financial contacts—are as operational as ever.

Today's finance monopolies, especially the "big three" or "big four" banks, the financial Leviathans, play no lesser role in monopoly domination than do the industrial and financial groups.

The urge for maximum expansion at home and abroad is immeasurably greater for the super-giant conglomerates than it ever was for the trusts and concerns of yesteryear. They are trying to make the whole capitalist world the arena of their activity.

Another characteristic feature of contemporary imperialism is the rapid growth of economic integration stimulated by state-monopoly measures. Capitalist integration is a complex, many-sided process connected both with qualitative changes in the forces of production and with the evolution of relations of production; it is manifest both in the economy and in politics.

Under pre-monopoly capitalism, the dividing line in international economic specialisation was between capitalist machine production (primarily in Britain, then the "workshop of the world") and pre-capitalist production of raw materials and food; the export of capital came to the forefront with the transition to monopolies and nationally-exclusive monopoly groups divided the world up among themselves. A new structure of exchange (machines for agrarian-raw materials) supplemented the former structure of international trade (factory-produced consumer goods for raw materials and food). At that stage, a tendency developed towards the concentration of international economic turnover (the movement of capital and of commodities) within the bounds of relatively independent industrial-agrarian complexes based on a direct or indirect colonial domination (Britain and the



nations of the British Empire, the USA and the countries of Latin America, etc.). Contacts between these complexes were limited because of various protectionist and preferential systems. The boundaries, however, were very mobile and conditional. They were constantly overlapped by the expansion of monopolies which, not content with dominating the zones they had taken over, tried to acquire new markets, sources of raw materials and spheres of capital investment. The battle of the finance and industrial groups, intensified by the unevenness of development, regularly broke agreements on the peaceful division of spheres of influence, and led to a worsening of contradictions among the imperialists and a redistribution of spheres of influence.

A number of distinctive features characterises international imperialist relations now that imperialism has lost its international hegemony and is obliged to adapt itself to the struggle of the two systems. These features include the following.

1. A narrowing of the sphere of imperialist domination and a restriction of the possibility of using war to repartition markets. The former imperialist industrial-agrarian complexes, formed on the basis of colonialism and dependence, disintegrate.

2. The development of a new and higher type of international specialisation of industrial production—intra-branch and itemised specialisation. Capitalist firms specialise in the output of one particular type of product (or even its components) on the calculation of finding a market, not in one, but in several countries. By these means, the monopolies extract advantage from the development of latest methods of flow-line production, automation and cybernetics.

A new form of international capital interlinking arises on this basis; international cartels and agreements develop whose main feature is international specialisation and the partition of markets for scientific and technological knowledge (patents, for example). International state-monopoly pools are set up in order to resolve a number of scientific and technological problems (for example, the Anglo-French production of Concorde, or the agreement between Britain, the Netherlands and West Germany on the production of enriched uranium).

3. State-monopoly control of the economy encourages

concentration and centralisation of capital and tends to create giant multinational monopolies.

The origin and development of such organisations as the Common Market and the EFTA are ultimately due to the above-mentioned processes. No matter what evolution these super-structural state-monopoly organisations undergo, no matter what crises they have met during their development or how their form has changed as a result, it is clear that they stem from deep-going qualitative changes in the economic structure of imperialism, which bear a relatively stable character.

Integration occupies a prominent place in the fight of imperialism against socialism and other revolutionary forces. We see clear attempts to use integration to put an economic base under the system of aggressive military and political blocs which have NATO as their nucleus. International capital is putting together an alliance of transnational monopolies directed against the labour movement in imperialist countries. Many diverse forms of collective neocolonialism are developing on the basis of integration.

Does that signify, however, the appearance of some sort of transnational capital without a national face? Does it mean the embodiment of the old thesis of ultra-imperialism? Many ideologists of the super-monopolies treat the new processes precisely in that way, maintaining that an international corporation makes national sovereignty an anachronism and that, at the present level of scientific progress, the national state increasingly outlives its usefulness and eventually loses all economic vitality, while power and profit are increasingly concentrated in the hands of a narrow circle of giant industrial inter-state global organisations.

Such assertions serve as a cover and justification for expansionism by the most powerful national-monopoly groups, above all the American super-monopolies which strive, through integration, to weaken, subordinate, plunder and, in the final count, swallow up the weaker partners and competitors.

Today, the trend towards internationalisation of capital is more than ever becoming involved in and conflicting with an opposite trend, which is reinforcing the nationally-exclusive character of the centres of the international monopoly



empires and their rivalry. This is an inevitable consequence of the greater state-monopoly character of capitalism. Both the accumulation of monopoly capital within individual imperialist states and its international expansion cannot occur without relying increasingly on a whole set of levers of national state economic policy. In that way, those very state-monopoly methods, through which international integrational alliances of imperialism are being put together, are being used by each national finance capital in its own interests.

Virtually every nationally-exclusive imperialism is now prepared to fight for international economic "liberalisation". At the same time, however, each of them would like it to be done so as to strengthen their own positions and not to give anything away to their competitors. In other words, integration is inherently combined with disintegration; it is becoming the source and the arena for a fiercer trade and finance war than ever before.

The fact that scientific progress is developing extremely unevenly and causing spasmodic changes in the correlation of the economic and technological potential of the embattled sides lends special tension to the imperialist rivalry in the context of integration.

The revolutionary forces take account of the contradictions in the imperialist camp. How they use them in their fight against imperialist integrational policy, against the coercion and arbitrary rule of the transnational monopolies has special importance today.

No less important is the fact that the imperialist takeovers which occur during integration, and the economic and financial clashes serve as firm testimony that capitalism is unable to cope with contemporary forces of production, even as it widely develops methods of state-monopoly control of the economy and international economic relations. They have outgrown the bounds of a system based on capitalist ownership. The internationalisation of production insistently dictates the need for abolishing the domination of monopoly capital. Leonid Brezhnev, speaking at the 1969 Meeting, said: "The unnatural character of the situation in which production complexes, some of which serve more than one country, remain the private property of a handful of millionaires and billionaires is becoming increasingly evident to the peoples.

The need for replacing capitalist by socialist relations of production is becoming ever more pressing."<sup>1</sup>

Postwar experience has confirmed with fresh vigour the scientific precision of the Leninist analysis of the main processes that constitute the economic basis for imperialist development; it has confirmed the futility of attempts by bourgeois and revisionist theoreticians to counterpose a more "refined" and "contemporary" analysis to Leninism.

Having discovered state-monopoly supports, the system of private capitalist relations which represents the shell of socialised production, has become even more parasitical, harmful and dangerous for mankind. The most manifest evidence of that is the vast scale of plundering of the social wealth by the so-called "military-industrial complex". Under imperialism, Lenin said, "states, which possess a military apparatus expanded as a consequence of imperialist rivalry, have become military monsters".<sup>2</sup>

The works of Lenin contain an analysis both of the profound connection between militarism and the very foundations of the bourgeois system and also the mechanism for creating an alliance of the largest monopolies with the military within the state apparatus—the military-industrial complex. Back in 1913, in an article called "Armaments and Capitalism", Lenin wrote: "The armaments fever has long afflicted British 'society' and the British Government, in exactly the same way as it has the French, German and other governments. . . . And we find that admirals and prominent statesmen . . . are shareholders and directors of shipyards, and of gunpowder, dynamite, ordnance and other factories. . . . The same thing, of course, takes place in all capitalist countries."<sup>3</sup>

The economic power of the military-industrial complex and its political influence have grown immeasurably; it has become, as it were, a "state within a state", encouraging the imperialist governments to extend the arms race.

L. I. Brezhnev said at the 1969 Meeting: "Militarism has always been part and parcel of imperialism. But today it

<sup>1</sup> *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow 1969*, p. 142.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 491.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 19, pp. 106-07.



has acquired truly unparalleled proportions. It is the fault of imperialism that the labour of many millions of people, the brilliant achievements of the human intellect, of the talent of scientists, researchers and engineers, are used not for the benefit of mankind, for promoting progress and the remaking of life on earth, but for barbarous, reactionary purposes, for the needs of war, the greatest of calamities for the peoples."<sup>1</sup>

Military expenditures place a heavy burden on the public, but they represent virtually a Fortunatus Purse for a tiny group of large companies which monopolise the state-military orders. Lenin said in this connection: "Interlinked on a world-wide scale, capital is thriving on armaments and wars."<sup>2</sup>

There are quite a number of bourgeois economists who try to prove that the development of military production has a beneficial effect on the economy and ensures the regular extension of the market, higher employment and accelerates economic growth. These assertions are nothing more than a sheer falsification of the facts for the purpose of apologising for militarism and military-industrial business.

The vast state expenditure on supporting and renewing the militarist machine, of course, creates a market for capitalist industry that is marked by a certain stability. The facts show that a sharp increase in the militarisation of the economy accompanied by large-scale construction of new military projects and a wave of mass renovation of military techniques, etc., can temporarily produce an upturn in industrial production or slow down a depression.

It is, however, important to see the wood for the trees: the systematic diversion of vast resources into military production, which falls out of the sphere of social reproduction, and, equally, the concentration of scientific research on manufacturing means of destruction, ultimately restrict the growth of production. The more than \$1,500,000 million which NATO member-states have spent on military projects since the bloc's formation vividly illustrate the monstrous scale of the militarist squandering of resources

<sup>1</sup> *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow 1969*, p. 143.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 227.

which slows down and disfigures economic and cultural progress.

One of the most obvious forms of the crying contradiction between the class opportunities presented by scientific progress and the results of its capitalist utilisation consists in the growing economic gap between the industrially developed states of the imperialist system and the liberated countries still dependent upon them. The disintegration of colonial regimes enabled the peoples that constitute a majority of the world population to take a big step forward along the path to complete national liberation. But the imperialists, as Lenin showed, can cleverly exploit economic backwardness and dependence on capitalist markets so as to plunder the politically sovereign states. Contemporary imperialism uses various weapons of a neocolonialist policy—i.e., on the one hand, so-called economic "assistance", and, on the other, military aggression and political *diktat*; it makes desperate efforts to keep the Third World within its orbit and to prevent it from becoming free of the exploiting mechanism of the capitalist world economy.

Scientific progress in the industrial centres of imperialism is, in fact, a factor that is worsening the situation of the liberated states, weakening their positions on the world capitalist market. This worsening is interlinked with the internal structural crisis of the economy. The narrow confines of the internal market, which prevent industrialisation, and the maintenance of an archaic social and economic structure, which hampers the extension of the internal market, constitute a vicious circle, supported by imperialism and local reaction, which encourages a wider economic gap.

Thus, the operation of the exploiting mechanism of the international capitalist division of labour, reinforced by imperialist policy, not only relies on the economic backwardness of the former colonies and dependencies, it increases that backwardness.

The share of the newly liberated states in the industrial production of the non-socialist world did not, in fact, alter during the 1960's. It remained one-tenth of the total industrial production in the non-socialist states. One must also bear in mind that over 70 per cent of the population of the non-socialist world lives in the liberated states and that these



states have a more rapid rate of population increase. All this is leading to a situation where, in industrial output per head of population, they are increasingly falling behind the advanced capitalist countries.

The so-called "aid" to liberated states—the state loans and subsidies given by imperialist states—lays an important part in the arsenal of neocolonialism. The very appearance and development of this new form of export of capital are indissolubly linked with the crisis of the imperialist world economy and the upsurge in the popular struggle for complete national liberation. In allotting means for "aid" from their budget, the imperialist states subsidise, as it were, this semi-colonial exploitation carried on by private monopolies. In spite of the considerable amount of state "aid" (it averaged some \$6,000 million a year during the 1960's), it is greatly offset by the overall loss of the liberated states from the export of profits of foreign capital and the continuing widening of the "price scissors". Moreover, the conditions and character of this "aid" are leading to an increase in these losses.

The diminishing share of developing states in the total export of private capital from imperialist states is above all due to the concern of the monopolies for the fate of their investments in the "socially dangerous" areas. No small part is being played by the "anti-industrialising" pressure from monopoly groups which export the products of their firms to the developing states.

There are also certain trends of a different character that have come to the fore in recent years: the desire of the monopolies to use cheap manpower in the developing states for making there labour-consuming parts of industrial products assembled at the head enterprises in the imperialist states. A new form of shackling international capitalist division of labour is thereby being created. The liberated states are given the job (which ties them to the markets of the imperialist states) of supplying individual labour-consuming parts and articles. This system is a useful means for the monopolies to put pressure on their own trade unions.

In an article on the multinational companies, the American *Business Week* states that American unions are seriously concerned at this form of American monopoly activity: "The

unions say that Taiwan's largest employer, with 12,000 workers, is now General Instrument Corp., which has shut down operations in Massachusetts and Rhode Island during the past two years. ... The AFL-CIO points a specially accusing finger at Mexico, where some 200 plants employing about 20,000 workers 'just south of the Mexican border' assemble everything from TV components to clothing. It cites as one example a \$71 million plant built by RCA Corp. in Juarez where 3,000 Mexicans are putting together electronic components for shipment to the US."<sup>1</sup>

That private monopoly capital prefers, nonetheless, to seek new pastures today primarily in the industrial zone of the world capitalist economy does not signify, of course, the voluntary departure of imperialism from the former colonies. On the contrary, the 1960's saw particularly stubborn attempts by the imperialists to use all manner of methods of coercion and *diktat*, intervention, coups and acts of aggression to halt the unceasing loss of their economic domination in the ex-colonies and dependencies. As the Chairman of the National Council of the Communist Party of India, Shripad Amrit Dange, said at the 1969 Meeting "in search of more profits, of more markets, the imperialist pressure on the newly liberated countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America to convert them into neocolonial bases increased".<sup>2</sup>

The policy of neocolonialism has a comparatively short history. But its real essence and its deep internal contradictions are already perfectly obvious. The policy of imperialist reformism in the newly liberated states, dictated by the interests of the global strategy of finance capital, has conflicted with the direct selfish interests of monopoly groups who do not want to nurture competitors in these countries where they have invested their capital.

The results of neocolonialist programmes are not an alliance but an unprecedented deepening of contradictions with the liberated states, not help to reforms but an abuse by imperialism and its satellites in unleashing aggressive wars, not social progress but the conservation of outmoded

<sup>1</sup> *Business Week*, Dec. 19, 1970, p. 95.

<sup>2</sup> *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow 1969*, p. 473.



social institutions, support for tyranny and the most reactionary, semi-feudal dictatorships. The 1969 Meeting records in its Document that "imperialism is responsible for the hardship and suffering of hundreds of millions of people. It is chiefly to blame for the fact that vast masses of people in Asian, African and Latin American countries are compelled to live in conditions of poverty, disease and illiteracy and under archaic social relations, and that entire nationalities are doomed to extinction."<sup>1</sup>

The developing antagonism between imperialism and the liberated states is an objective basis of the deepening national liberation revolutions. As Lenin had foretold, these revolutions are increasingly acquiring an anti-capitalist orientation and are becoming a struggle for the transition of liberated states to a non-capitalist path of development which, in the future, will lead to socialism. The emergence of a group of states with a socialist orientation is not a local phenomenon but a trend which has a broad historical perspective. The 24th Party Congress stated that "imperialism is being subjected to ever greater pressure by the forces which have sprung from the national liberation struggle, above all by young independent and anti-imperialist-minded states of Asia and Africa.

"The main thing is that *the struggle for national liberation in many countries has in practical terms begun to grow into a struggle against exploitative relations, both feudal and capitalist.*"<sup>2</sup>

The countries of the Third World cannot possibly attain complete national liberation without the closest bond between the national liberation struggle and the international working-class movement and, above all, without developing multilateral co-operation with the Soviet Union and other socialist states.

There is no doubt that the first steps in promoting that co-operation have seriously undermined imperialist positions in a number of areas of the former colonial world, that it has helped to promote the establishing of political independence and economic autonomy of the liberated states.

<sup>1</sup> *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow 1969*, p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> *24th Congress of the CPSU*, p. 23.

### 3. The Heightened State-Monopoly Character of Capitalism and Developing Material and Socio-Political Conditions for Revolution

Lenin's ideas on state-monopoly capitalism are a unique example of scientific forecasting, profound and precise analysis.

Bourgeois writers for long regarded the experience of state control of the capitalist economy during World War I as an episode or phenomenon connected merely with a wartime economy. After studying this experience, Lenin outlined the main trend of the relations of production of monopoly capitalism.

As the experience of recent years has shown, one of the chief directions of capitalist adjustment to the new situation is the accelerated development of state-monopoly capitalism. Describing the new features of imperialism, the Document of the 1969 Meeting stresses, primarily, its exaggerated state-monopoly character: "It resorts ever more extensively to such instruments as state-stimulated monopolistic concentration of production and capital, redistribution by the state of an increasing proportion of the national income, allocation of war contracts to the monopolies, government financing of industrial development and research programmes, the drawing up of economic development programmes on a country-wide scale, the policy of imperialist integration and new forms of capital export."<sup>1</sup>

Lenin described the development of state-monopoly capitalism as a process "of state-controlled capitalist production, combining the colossal power of capitalism with the colossal power of the state into a single mechanism and bringing tens of millions of people within the single organisation of state capitalism."<sup>2</sup> The pivot of the growth of monopoly capitalism into a state-monopoly form includes the fusion of the state with the monopolies, the development of

<sup>1</sup> *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow 1969*, p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, p. 403.



the economic function of the bourgeois state, and its growing intervention in economic affairs for the sake of finance capital as a whole.

The development of state economic functions takes various forms. The main form, which is typical of all imperialist powers, is the state redistribution of the national income largely implemented through the fiscal system.

The following table shows the state expenditure as a percentage of the final social product.

Years	USA	FRG	France	Italy	Britain	Japan
1950	21.3	31.0	30.5	28.5	39.3	21.4
1969	31.5	34.7*	39.5*	36.7	49.2	20.8*

\* 1968

Source: *Sovremenny imperializm, ekonomiko-statistichesky obzor*, Supplement to *Problemy mira i sotsializma* No. 3, 1971, p. 20.

The mounting state-monopoly intervention in the economy is also being accompanied by a great increase in the state share of capital investment. In the period 1950 to 1969, this figure has increased from 16.1 to 21.6 per cent in the USA; it has reached 20-25 per cent in West Germany, 25-30 per cent in France and about 30 per cent in Italy. In Britain, the share of state-capital investment in 1969 was over 46 per cent.

Along with the broadening measures of indirect state fiscal influence on the economy, the direct state participation is growing both in material production and in the non-productive sphere on the basis of direct state involvement in industry, transport and other sectors. Its scale is not the same in all imperialist states, but each possesses a state-monopoly property and a state-monopoly economic sector.

In such countries as Britain, France and Italy, state-monopoly property has reached a particularly high level since the war and embraces a large section of the infrastructure and such basic sectors as transport, electricity and coal.

The subsidising of private industry using the "price scissors" on commodities of the private capitalist and the state-monopoly sector is one of the main forms by which the monopolies obtain surplus value produced at state firms. This

is one of the channels of state-monopoly redistribution of the national income in the interests of finance capital.

The main objective of monopoly capital in getting the state to directly involve in basic sectors is to ensure their reconstruction at state expense and to increase the profits of leading monopoly groups through lower costs of fuel, energy and transport.

By virtue of the fact that the state-run sectors every year pay vast sums of money as interest by way of compensation, the surplus value created in these sectors is largely appropriated by the former owners. The capitalist state exploits workers both as a representative of monopoly capital as a whole and as the plenipotentiary of the monopolies, the former owners of state-run enterprises. None other than the extreme Right-wing proponent of Labourism, Hugh Gaitskell had to admit that the nationalisation carried out in Britain could not be regarded as identical with the attainment of socialist aims "for compensation means that the flow of 'un-earned' income continues—in the form of interest instead of profits and dividends".<sup>1</sup>

What are the chief reasons for state intervention in the capitalist economy? It is becoming an objective need for capitalism in a situation where the concentration of production and capital is leading to monopolies. In the middle of the last century, Marx noted that the development of capitalist socialisation in certain spheres "establishes a monopoly ... and thereby requires state interference".<sup>2</sup>

The development of monopolies and their system of monopoly prices increasingly infringes upon the operation of the spontaneous market mechanism of economic control which was present in "laissez-faire" capitalism. The mechanism requires adjusting and refining through measures of state control which becomes a condition for ensuring the profits of monopoly capital that, from the start of its existence, occupies a commanding position in the bourgeois state.

The development of state-monopoly capitalism, therefore, has as its basis monopoly concentration and is determined by the operation of far-reaching economic processes in bourgeois

<sup>1</sup> H. Gaitskell, *Socialism and Nationalisation*, London, 1956, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. III, p. 438.



society. The very establishment of the supremacy of finance capital in the economy and the policy presupposes state participation in production and state interference in the economy on behalf of the monopolies. The draft Party Programme adopted at the 8th Congress of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks), defined, in Lenin's words, the entry of capitalism into the imperialist stage as "the replacement of free competition by state-monopoly capitalism".<sup>1</sup>

The developed system of state-monopoly economy in all its multifarious forms did not arise automatically and simultaneously with the establishment of monopoly rule. This system arose in a complex process and long transition from monopolies to a wide state participation in the economy.

The development of monopolies and their supreme capitalist form—state monopolies—strengthened the elements of planning in the bourgeois economy, but cannot remove competition, spontaneity and anarchy of production which are part of private capitalist ownership of the means of production.

Under these circumstances, the development of monopoly capitalism into state-monopoly capitalism which, as Lenin noted, characterises the whole imperialist era,<sup>2</sup> cannot at any time achieve a zenith or lead to the creation of a pure and refined state-monopoly economy.

The internal contradictions of competition and monopolies, the contradictions of the interests of individual groups of finance capital and the interests of the monopoly bourgeoisie as a whole, represented by the aggregate monopolist—the state—makes state involvement in the economy exceedingly uneven. Many forms of state-monopoly intervention, like state planning of individual production spheres, first arise as specific features of a military economy, then, as it were, die out, then again flare up in different forms.

State-monopoly capitalism develops unevenly on a territorial basis. The extent of state economic control in different imperialist countries does not automatically conform with the scale of capital concentration. Moreover, as experience shows, the monopoly bourgeoisie of countries that lag

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 122.

<sup>2</sup> See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 410.

behind apply state levers particularly widely in order to catch up with their rivals in their level of organisation and, thereby, strengthen their market position.

Imperialist rivalry, therefore, acts as an accelerator of state involvement. This was apparent most forcibly in the two world wars, caused by the struggle of imperialist states for world repartition.

The development of the bourgeois state's economic functions today reflects attempts by monopoly capital somehow to soften the sharply increasing contradictions of capitalist reproduction that have resulted from postwar technological progress. An attempt is being made, by state-monopoly redistribution of the national income, to counterpose factors associated with scientific progress, which have exaggerated the trend to lower the average rate of profit, to measures specifically designed to increase the profitability of the private monopoly sector to the detriment of the whole of society.

This increasing trend to state involvement is one of the principal consequences of the deepening of capitalism's general crisis and the exacerbation of contradictions in the bourgeois system. At the same time, it is an important weapon with which the monopoly bourgeoisie is trying to reinforce imperialist positions in the face of the advance of socialism and all revolutionary forces.

The strengthening of state-monopoly intervention in the economy is becoming also a response by finance capital to the social and economic challenge of socialism. State-monopoly control therefore acquires a special intensity wherever the "social flanks" of imperialism are imperilled.

All this explains the fact that state-monopoly enterprise and capitalist "programming" of the economy in France, Italy and Britain are today more developed than in the USA, although the level of concentration of monopoly capital is higher in the USA.

In recent years, however, even the all-powerful finance capital of the USA has had to face the facts of a new upsurge in the anti-imperialist struggle within the country. This struggle is increasingly acquiring a scope similar to the mass movement of social protest in the 1930's when the ruling class was forced to adopt a number of state-monopoly measures



known as the New Deal. This circumstance, like the efforts of the American ruling class to strengthen its positions in the economic and scientific competition with the USSR is causing the main citadel of contemporary imperialism sharply to intensify state-monopoly economic methods. Alongside the militarist forms peculiar to the USA, there are forms of state-monopoly control in which West European capitalism has so far outstripped America. At the same time, US imperialism has begun, in recent years, to lead in the latest and most important direction of state-monopoly development—i.e., state financing and stimulation of scientific and technological progress.

What are the major characteristics of state-monopoly capitalism today?

1. State-monopoly intervention in the economy which had previously been only an extreme means adopted during world war or a sharp increase in economic and class contradictions; this has now become a permanent feature of the economy. It is an inalienable part of the mechanism of capitalist reproduction.

2. The role of the bourgeois state in scientific progress and the application of scientific achievements has reached a qualitatively new stage. The bourgeois state today not only bears the main share of expenditure on new techniques, it creates completely new industrial sectors out of the state budget. The state also generously subsidises the introduction of new technology by monopoly firms. Renovation of basic capital in private capitalist firms is stimulated by various financial measures (taxation privileges connected with investment programmes, allowing capital to depreciate more quickly, etc.). The financial risk associated with developing and applying new technology is therefore borne today by the taxpayer, while the fruits are appropriated by monopoly capital.

State-monopoly financing of scientific progress serves a dual purpose. On the one hand, it is aimed at increasing the profits of leading monopoly groups at the expense of a sharp increase in surplus value rate and exploitation of workers at capitalist firms, and at strengthening the positions of these groups in the competitive struggle in world capitalist markets. On the other hand, as mentioned above, science and

technology are increasingly becoming an instrument of imperialist strategy in the struggle of two systems.

3. In attempting to defeat socialism on the economic front, capitalism uses certain elements of economic planning, borrowing them from the experience of economic planning in socialist states. As the late Walter Ulbricht said at the 1969 Meeting: "Big capital, which from the moment socialism arose in the Soviet Union has constantly attacked the very idea of economic planning, now itself is planning in the large concerns and is even compelling the state machine to engage in a kind of programming in the interest of capital. The big monopolies are thus forced to borrow from the Soviet Union definite forms and methods of programming, although in a modified form. Here it is a matter of trying to mitigate the contradictions inherent in the capitalist system. But this does not alter the substance of capitalism."<sup>1</sup>

Capitalist programming is spreading to an increasingly large number of countries and is particularly prominent in France where, since the war, five long-term economic development programmes have been adopted. It is also making headway in Italy, and, to a certain extent, in Britain. The West German monopoly bourgeoisie, until the economic crisis of 1967, advertised a programme of "neo-liberalism" and proclaimed their intention to restrict state intervention in the economy. This doctrine has since been rejected. Following upon the example of France and Italy, the West German government has begun to implement state-monopoly programmes of economic development.

While the government-backed plans used to be generally declarative and unsupported by actual economic resources, matters now stand differently. To realise their plans, they employ vast financial resources concentrated in the hands of the state and a ramified system of state controls. All this makes capitalist programming a real economic factor.

The course of development has confirmed Lenin's conclusion that the transition to state-monopoly capitalism

<sup>1</sup> *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow 1969*, p. 222.



means that "capitalism is now evolving directly into its higher, regulated, form".<sup>1</sup> At the same time, state-monopoly programming confirms at every step the Leninist judgement of its class nature: "Planning does not make the worker less of a slave, but it enables the capitalist to make his profits 'according to plan'."<sup>2</sup>

The main aim of state-monopoly plans is to strengthen capitalist exploitation over the long term and in a planned way, to increase the rate of surplus value for the sake of speeding up capitalist accumulation, intensifying monopoly concentration and bolstering the international positions of the leading finance and industrial groups.

State-monopoly plans essentially represent a new form of compact between the largest monopolies. These are the plans for an assault on the standards of living of the working people, for the subordination of small and medium enterprises to finance capital and the extinction of non-monopoly production. The attempts by the ruling classes to freeze wages or restrict wage rises and encroach upon trade union rights are an inalienable feature of these plans.

State-monopoly capitalism is being forced to augment its policy of direct pressure by a policy of social manoeuvring. The 24th Party Congress recorded: "In the conditions of the confrontation with socialism, the ruling circles of the capitalist countries are afraid more than they have ever been of the class struggle developing into a massive revolutionary movement. Hence, the bourgeoisie's striving to use more camouflaged forms of exploitation and oppression of the working people, and its readiness now and again to agree to partial reforms in order to keep the masses under its ideological and political control as far as possible."<sup>3</sup>

Under popular pressure in Western Europe and, of late, in the USA too, the bourgeois state has had to increase its expenditure on social insurance, unemployment benefit and pensions. But these measures are not dictated by concern for universal welfare, as the apologists for imperialism make out. The driving motive behind the monopoly state is the

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, p. 306.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> 24th Congress of the CPSU, p. 20.

desire to reinforce the social flanks, to apply new, refined but no less brutal methods of exploitation.

4. The use of state-monopoly methods has today acquired unparalleled scope and essentially new forms in foreign trade relations.

The above-mentioned new features do not push into the background that peculiarity of the state-monopoly system which has operated from its very birth—i.e., the indissoluble link between this system and the militarisation of the economy and the whole of society.

The class essence of state-monopoly property and of the whole system of state economic control has long been the subject of fierce ideological and political contention.

Reformists identify state intervention in the economy with the development of socialist economic elements. Basing themselves on the idea of a state standing above classes, social democrats paint a picture of the gradual evolutionary development of socialism on the basis of state control and state ownership. The British Right-wing Labour Party ideologist, Hugh Dalton, had expressed this idea when he said: "Socialism is a quantitative thing... We may measure the degree in which any particular community is Socialist by the relative extent of the 'socialised sector', and of the 'private sector', in its economic life."<sup>1</sup>

Another Labour politician, John Strachey, backed up the thesis of the state standing above classes and opposing monopoly groups, with the proposition that the main conflict in bourgeois society is between the democratic state and the "oligopolistic economy".<sup>2</sup>

The revolutionary workers' movement opposes these notions, based essentially on the assimilation of that movement within monopoly capitalism, with the only correct and genuinely scientific approach to state economic control under capitalism: such control is nothing but a means of enriching the monopoly groups and strengthening the finance capital domination; under capitalism, state ownership of the means of production is a variety of bourgeois exploitative ownership.

<sup>1</sup> H. Dalton, *Practical Socialism for Britain*, London, 1935, pp. 26-27.

<sup>2</sup> J. Strachey, *Contemporary Capitalism*, London, 1957.



Marx and Engels decisively opposed those defenders of state capitalism who "without more ado declare *all* state ownership, even of the Bismarckian sort, to be socialistic".<sup>1</sup>

Engels, in examining the first manifestations of state monopoly capitalism stressed that "the modern state, no matter what its form, is essentially a capitalist machine, the state of the capitalists, the ideal personification of the total national capital. The more it proceeds to the taking over of the productive forces, the more does it actually become the national capitalist, the more citizens does it exploit. . . . The capitalist relation is not done away with. It is rather brought to a head."<sup>2</sup> History has completely confirmed this judgement. The state-monopoly sector in Nazi Germany was one of the supports of the monstrous terroristic dictatorship of finance capital which brought untold suffering to mankind.

The US monopoly capital has managed to turn to its own use those vast areas of production which it was obliged to nationalise under popular pressure, after the last war, in several West European countries.

It is also important to remember that state-monopoly enterprise and control, whatever form, directly or indirectly are aimed in the short or long term to preserve, defend and expand monopoly profit. The pursuit of profit continues to permeate all the functioning of the capitalist system.

This testifies to the fact that the development of state-monopoly economic control does not swallow up private capitalist economy and do away with its inherent anarchy and competition; it is a kind of superstructure above it. The strengthening of planning associated with state intervention actually intensifies the most serious antagonism within imperialism.

The developing contradictions in capitalist reproduction remain one of the important factors in undermining capitalism's positions. Experience has demonstrated clearly that the present system of state control cannot overcome the economic cycle. A new wave of depressions and marked troubles swept across the capitalist world during the 1960's and

<sup>1</sup> F. Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, Moscow, 1969, p. 329.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 330-31.

in the early 1970's. It engulfed one country after another: Italy in 1964, Japan in 1965, Britain and West Germany in 1966 and 1967. A combination of the crises in Western Europe and the competitive weakness within the United States led to a fall in the growth rate of industrial output throughout the capitalist world in 1967. The upward swing of industry in 1968 and 1969 was accompanied by galloping inflation and severe currency crises, while, in the latter part of 1969, a protracted economic crisis began in the USA which, in turn, led to a worsening currency crisis.

The world currency crisis, being a relatively independent process, ultimately reflects the deep-going contradictions of capitalist reproduction and is the result of uneven development and internal antagonism between state-monopoly policy and the spontaneous market forces.

The chronic dollar crisis has been due to the continuing weakening of US economic positions in the world and the vast military expenditure. The working people have had to bear the principal burden of economic troubles associated with the currency crises. It is at their expense that the ruling circles use currency measures to try to improve the financial situation and reinforce the positions of the monopolies in the fight for markets. Every round of devaluation is to the considerable detriment of the workers' interests and leads to a further growth in the cost of living and to inflation: "State-monopoly regulation, exercised in forms and on a scale, which meet the interests of monopoly capital and are aimed at preserving its role, is unable to control the spontaneous forces of the capitalist market."<sup>1</sup>

There can be no integral system of planned capitalism. The undiminished competitive struggle between monopolies, between the trusts and non-monopoly production and between nationally-exclusive state-monopoly groups are the undisguised facts of capitalist actuality in the world today.

The development of state-monopoly capitalism also objectively creates grounds for a clash of interests of individual monopolies craving for greater direct profit, with the overall strategy of finance capital pursued by the state, the "aggre-

<sup>1</sup> *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow 1969*, p. 19.



gate monopolist", and aimed at preserving and defending the system of private capitalist profit as a whole. This new contradiction is apparent in the unceasing internecine struggle within monopoly circles on many issues of state economic policy.

The rivalry among monopolies penetrates the agencies of state control. Behind the scenes there is fierce in-fighting for obtaining state contracts and subsidies, for determining the types of armaments that the state wishes to have produced and over the structure and orientation of state-monopoly plans.

The sharp increase in the degree of monopoly concentration and the increasing state intervention in the economy are bound to have an effect on the mechanism of capitalist reproduction. The big companies use modern computer techniques and methods of economic forecasting and conduct systematic market research on the basis of which they formulate their production programmes. The relatively stable state-guaranteed market is being expanded. Yet state-monopoly capitalism does not remove the cyclical movement of capitalist reproduction; it lends it new forms.

An important characteristic feature of the present-day cycle is the increasing "coupling" of deep-going capitalist economic springs with political factors. These include the effect of the bourgeois state on the market, along with, or rather, in a direction opposed to the class strategy of the monopolies, the pressure of the labour and democratic movement which opposes the state-monopoly machine and is exerting an increasing influence on the course of reproduction.

The planned policy of the state is aimed at increasing the exploitation of the working class, at restraining or even reducing wages, restricting consumption by means of inflation and higher taxes. This encourages the growth of forces operating in the direction of a relative narrowing of the market. Often in a situation of "overheating", the state directly and openly restricts the capacity of the market which encourages a halt in growth or a fall in production.

The policy of finance capital is being opposed by the anti-monopoly movement with increasingly effective mass actions that are forcing the monopolies to make concessions by way

of higher wages and better social security; this is leading to an increase in purchasing power and, at certain stages, is helping the forces operating against depression.

In other words, the contradictions of capitalist reproduction are taking new forms.

It is becoming even more axiomatic that it is not the imperialist state with its controls that ultimately determines the direction of economic growth at a particular stage. On the contrary, the spontaneous forces of the capitalist economic cycle determine the direction of these controls. State economic policy is becoming a factor encouraging the transition from one phase of the cycle to another, an instrument of cyclical development.

Let us take by way of example the course of US economic policy. At the beginning of the 1960s, when a change was occurring from a slow economy to a cyclical upswing, various groups in the ruling élite competed among themselves in promising a higher rate of economic growth. But what happened when the US economy stood on the verge of a new cyclical downturn? Then the slogan of the ruling circles and state measures was proclaimed to be a "cooling" of the economy and a slowing down of growth. The progressive American economist, Hyman Lumer, wrote in May 1969: "The measures being taken now assertedly to 'cool' the economy are sharpening the contradiction between production and consumption no less than did those designed to stimulate it. Therefore, the possibility of a new recession or even of a more severe downturn is always very much in the picture."<sup>1</sup> This analysis was swiftly borne out.

The crisis had a number of peculiarities. It was the first crisis of over-production during a large local war. It testified that militarisation is by no means a universal method of maintaining high economic activity. For the first time since World War II, a fall in production was accompanied by a severe crisis of securities on the market and the bankruptcy of a number of large firms. It proved wrong those economists who had maintained that state-monopoly capitalism had removed any possibility of a chain of bankruptcies occurring.

An important characteristic feature of the crisis which

<sup>1</sup> *Political Affairs*, May 1969, p. 15.



had serious social consequences was the combination of the downturn in production and growth in unemployment, on the one hand, and the more rapid inflation, on the other. Thus, the standard of living of the workers simultaneously had to suffer a fall in wages due to greater unemployment and a higher cost of living.

At the beginning of 1971, many US bourgeois economists announced that the crisis was over; 1971 would be a year of new upsurge. This did not take place. In 1971, US industrial output remained approximately at the 1970 level. The economic stagnation was combined with an unprecedented worsening in the American foreign trade position, a great balance of payments deficit and a worsening dollar crisis. In this situation, the US government had to recognise the bankruptcy of its economic policy, to take extraordinary measures "to save the dollar", and to proclaim the "new economic policy" whose essence was, in fact, to make a new assault on the living standards of the working people and on the rights of the trade unions.

Elements of crisis began to spread in other imperialist states. In Italy, for example, the 1971 output was 3 per cent down on that of 1970. In Japan, a country which only recently had had the highest industrial growth rate in the history of capitalism, the economic climate quickly turned cool. In the first six months of 1971, Japanese industrial output was down on the previous six months. The British economy lapsed into a state of protracted stagnation; and the percentage of output increment in West Germany sharply fell. The growth of contradictions in capitalist reproduction debilitated the capitalist currency system established after the last war. The end to the dollar exchange for gold in August 1971 and the subsequent dollar devaluation added fuel to the currency war between the capitalist powers and encouraged the growth of crisis phenomena in production. All these facts are a vivid testimony to the inability of state-monopoly control to save capitalism from crises.

Imperialist propaganda does all it can to prove that, today, social polarisation of property is disappearing, a levelling of incomes is taking place while scientific progress is ensuring wide sections of the public more and more consumer goods, thus destroying the objective basis for class struggle.

In fact, however, the scientific and technological revolution under state-monopoly capitalism is extending the scope of social polarisation. The growth in monopoly profits in recent years is unprecedented. Between 1964 and 1968, the average annual net profits of US corporations was twice as high as it was during the Korean war (1950-1953) and four times higher than during World War II (1942-1944).

The imperialist legend of income-levelling is being dispersed by the facts of the growing gap between monopoly profits and wages. In the USA between 1965 and 1967, for example, corporation profits grew by over \$2,500 million, while the average weekly real wage actually declined. Wage increases obtained through stubborn strike action are constantly eaten into by the high cost of living and taxation.

The introduction of automation and other technological innovations increase the possibility of raising unemployment to catastrophic dimensions. This tendency in recent years has been to some extent balanced by an expansion of overall employment associated with the maintenance of a relatively high rate of economic growth and an expansion of the non-productive sphere; but the threat of a catastrophe constantly hangs over the working people. Universal insecurity about the future, the presence of wide zones of desolation and decay, and the huge scale of officially recognised poverty are inalienable features of capitalism today.

The trend towards a relative worsening in the living conditions of the working class and an increase in the gap between the workers' material welfare, obtained through stubborn struggles, and the needs connected with the increased value of manpower and the more complex nature of labour and its increasing intensity are all facts that cannot be denied. The 1969 Meeting pointed out that "contrary to assertions about the 'revolution in incomes' and 'social partnership', capitalist exploitation is in fact increasing. The rise in wages lags far behind the growth rate of labour productivity and the intensification of labour, behind the social needs and even more so behind the growth of monopoly profits".<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow 1969*, p. 19.



State-monopoly capitalism, by putting the interests of finance capital first, cannot and will not, by its very nature, try to rid society of unemployment and the poverty of millions of people even in the wealthiest imperialist states. State-backed appropriation by the monopolies of the fruits of scientific progress increases the insecurity of the working class and makes their work harder. The military-industrial complex and the state-monopoly machine constantly try to erode democratic freedoms won by the workers and encourage the activity of ultra-reactionary and pro-fascist groups. "The peoples of the world are seeing with increasing clarity that imperialism has created a vast production machine but that this machine serves only to increase the wealth and power of a tiny handful of capitalist magnates. In the sphere ruled by world capitalism tens and hundreds of millions are suffering from hunger and poverty. Imperialism uses the greatest achievements of technology to intensify the exploitation of millions of working people and to prepare for piratical wars. Mankind pays for the existence of imperialism with hundreds of thousands of lives—the victims of these wars and the victims of ruthless exploitation."<sup>1</sup>

State-monopoly capitalism intensifies the major class contradiction of bourgeois society, that between labour and capital, and takes to complete maturity the prerequisites for resolving this contradiction by a revolutionary transition to socialism.

Lenin comprehensively studied this dialectical law of state-monopoly capitalism. He wrote: "Under private ownership of the means of production, all these steps towards greater monopolisation and control of production by the state are inevitably accompanied by intensified exploitation of the working people, by an increase in oppression; it becomes more difficult to resist the exploiters, and reaction and military despotism grow. At the same time these steps inevitably lead to a tremendous growth in the profits of the big capitalists at the expense of all other sections of the population. ... But with private ownership of the means of production abolished and state power passing completely to the proletariat, these very conditions are a pledge of success for society's

<sup>1</sup> L. I. Brezhnev, *Following Lenin's Course*, pp. 295-96.

transformation that will do away with the exploitation of man by man and ensure the well-being of everyone."<sup>1</sup>

To sum up, the following points ought to be noted. First, by using new methods of state-monopoly control, by increasing elements of planning, extending the scale of state ownership and making accelerated scientific development a key factor of its policy, the monopoly bourgeoisie itself increasingly undermines the private capitalist basis of bourgeois society and prepares the way for socialism. The maturation of material conditions for socialism within the bourgeois system has intensified and accelerated immeasurably.

The Leninist proposition that state-monopoly capitalism is the prelude to socialism is particularly relevant at a time when finance capital, in order to exist, is being forced to borrow economic planning methods from the socialist states. State-monopoly capitalism, aimed at saving private capitalist ownership is, at the same time, preparing its rejection. The new processes in the capitalist economy thereby affirm the profound truth of the Leninist thesis that *state-monopoly capitalism is the most complete material preparation for socialism*.

Second, the finance oligarchy, by its state-monopoly measures, is accelerating the process of worsening the economic position of small producers and bankrupting them. The vital interests of peasant-farmers and the urban middle strata are bringing them into a closer alliance with the working class in the anti-monopoly struggle. At the same time, the interests of the proletariat and the rapidly growing army of white-collar workers are increasingly coming together. The antagonism between the interests of the bulk of the population and those of the finance oligarchy is intensifying alongside the contradiction between labour and capital. All this signifies *the creation of a much wider social basis for struggle for socialism*.

Third, a growth in instability due to the new economic processes is bringing about a situation where the working class has to increase its pressure on the monopoly bourgeoisie and its state in order to achieve increased gains and baulk attempts by the ruling class to transfer to it the burden of

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, pp. 309-10.



expenses caused by contradictions of capitalist growth and to preclude any possibility of a catastrophic fall in its living standards during cyclical depression. Hence the tendency for the class struggle to increase, the international situation becoming especially favourable to the working class of the capitalist states for the forces of socialism are on the offensive.

State-monopoly methods of attacks on the working class are gradually destroying the illusions that the state stands above classes. Increasingly wider sections of the working people are coming to realise that they can only defend their living standards through a struggle that goes beyond individual factories and is concentrated on vital issues of state policy. In other words, the economic struggle is acquiring a political nature; it is joining the struggle for the defence of peace and democratic liberties against imperialist aggression and the omnipotence of big capital. *This extends in an unparalleled way the political arena for struggle against capitalism.*

Monopoly capital is naturally taking counter-measures. The state-monopoly economy gives it additional means for putting pressure on the working people and the temporary high economic activity presents more opportunities for sowing and maintaining reformist illusions.

Social and political contradictions, due to the new economic capitalist processes, does not develop evenly. During the 1950s, one noticed certain contrasts between the high spots of the anti-imperialist struggle in the national liberation movement zone and a relatively stable political situation in the imperialist centres. Capitalist ideologists took this unsound temporary "lull" on the home front of the monopoly bourgeoisie as an apparent consolidation of their political positions, and began to spread the idea that the revolutionary processes in industrial Western states were a matter of the past and could not reappear in the mass consumer society of the second half of the 20th century. This was the underlying theme of the various bourgeois theoretical works which appeared at the end of the 1950's and the beginning of the 1960's.

Bourgeois academics no longer talk about revolution being a thing of the past. Discussion now is on what new forms the revolutionary movement is taking and what activity is caus-

ing its development. This is a recognition of the fact that, despite all the efforts of the imperialist ruling groups to use the relatively viable economic situation for strengthening their social flanks, they are faced with a new upsurge in the vigorous anti-imperialist struggle within the imperialist states.

Monopoly capitalism and its propaganda machine are doing everything possible to halt this process or to divert social activity of the new recruits to the struggle along a false path so as to avert an onslaught on the centres of bourgeois domination. They assiduously advertise the idea of a generation conflict. They claim that the main social confrontation today is attributable to the generation gap—between youth and the older generation.

Another version is the apparent conflict between the industrial system, on the one hand—including the allegedly integrated technocrats and the industrial working class—and those who stand outside this structure, on the other.

No matter what new apologetics bourgeois ideologists advance, one thing is clear: they are unable to use measures of state control and relatively high economic activity to disarm the labour movement politically, to undermine the influence of communist parties and to establish a class peace. Today, the citadels of imperialism have become an arena of vigorous struggle by the democratic, revolutionary forces.



## DEMOCRATIC STRUGGLE AS A COMPONENT OF SOCIALIST STRUGGLE

The Leninist theory of the development of the democratic revolution into socialist revolution reveals the essence of the relationship between the fight for democracy and socialist revolution.

The protest of wide sections of the public and all progressive forces against the reactionary and anti-popular policy of imperialism is mounting in the capitalist world with every passing year. A variety of democratic movements are arising. The democratic ideals trampled upon by monopoly capitalism have been reborn and further developed on a new basis in close harmony with the proletarian class struggle for socialism. The 1969 International Meeting said that "the interests of the struggle against imperialism, which attempts to stifle basic human freedoms, demand a tireless fight to defend and win freedom of speech, the press, assembly, demonstration and association, for the equality of all citizens, *to democratise every aspect of social life*. A firm rebuff must be administered to any attempt and any legislation by reaction designed to nullify the democratic rights and freedoms won in the course of hard class battles."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow 1969*, p. 39.

### 1. Growth of Democratic into Socialist Revolution

It is to Lenin's credit that we have a profound study of bourgeois-democratic revolution in the imperialist epoch and its natural connection with the proletarian class struggle and proletarian revolution.

As the imperialist era began, the world capitalist system matured for socialist revolution. The system, however, is conspicuous for its extreme heterogeneity. At the beginning of the 20th century, countries which had not yet passed through bourgeois revolution held a prominent place in the colourful mosaic of countries that differed in economic level, social structure and political system. Although, by the objective logic of historical development, they were also drawn into the world capitalist system, their economies were bound up with feudal and semi-feudal relations. They faced anti-feudal, bourgeois-democratic revolutions which, with the whole capitalist system ripe for socialist revolution, could no longer develop in the old way.

The objective importance of the bourgeois revolutions that took place in the 16th, 17th, 18th and 19th centuries lay in their destruction of feudal relations and the preparing of the ground for the unhampered development of capitalism. Already in the mid-19th century, as Marx and Engels had astutely noted, the European big bourgeoisie had run out of revolutionary steam and had been inclined to compromise with feudalism at the expense of the common people. The decisive revolutionary break with feudal relations increasingly threatened the capitalist system itself. The Marxist idea of uninterrupted revolution was based on a study of these laws and processes. Revolution, which had begun with the overthrow of feudal regimes, could, by the objective logic of its development, lead to socialist revolution and the overthrow of capitalism. In the imperialist era this trend, which had fully manifested itself in the revolutions in France and Germany in 1848-1849, became even more obvious. Monopoly capital, fearing proletarian revolution, could not uproot feudalism in any decisive way. Furthermore, wherever possible, it tried to preserve feudal relations. The imperialist



bourgeoisie consolidated all the reactionary forces to bar the way to the advancing proletarian revolution.

The close intertwining of the novel imperialist and the outmoded semi-feudal relations was particularly evident in Russia, where a fairly well-developed monopoly capitalism co-existed with an extensive network of semi-feudal relations. The growth of forces of production demanded the abolition of the outmoded semi-feudal relations, a task that a bourgeois-democratic revolution was intended to resolve. But the revolution, aimed primarily at clearing the way for capitalism, grew up in an era when the world capitalist system had itself entered a phase of decline. In such circumstances, revolutionary changes, aimed at getting rid of pre-capitalist forms of exploitation, objectively created a threat to the new capitalism. In upholding its positions, monopoly capital showed a desire to combine with the most reactionary forces in a common policy of hostility to any revolution.

Monopoly capitalism in Russia became grafted on to the outmoded economic structure and vestiges of the feudal system. As a result, two types of contradictions became intertwined in its economy: those inherited from the feudal-landowning system and those which were part of the capitalist system. This, in turn, brought together two different social battles taking place at the heart of society. Lenin wrote: "In present-day Russia it is not two contending forces that form the content of the revolution, but two distinct and different social wars: one waged within the present autocratic-feudal system, the other within the future bourgeois-democratic system, whose birth we are already witnessing. One is the struggle of the entire people for freedom (the freedom of bourgeois society), for democracy, i.e., the sovereignty of the people; the other is the class struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie for a socialist organisation of society."<sup>1</sup>

No less important is the fact that, in the imperialist era, no matter where democratic revolution takes place, it develops while the general crisis of the whole capitalist system is advancing unrestrainedly on a world-wide scale and with immense force. The deep-going crises that arise bring together

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 9, pp. 306-07.

er even more the democratic and socialist revolutions. In a reference to World War I, Lenin wrote: "The imperialist war has *linked up* the Russian revolutionary crisis, which stems from a bourgeois-democratic revolution, with the growing crisis of the proletarian, socialist revolution in the West."<sup>1</sup> Imperialism embroiled mankind in a catastrophe to extricate themselves from which people had to move decisively forward to socialism and to break with the system of capitalist relations. In practice, it was impossible to obviate the crisis of semi-feudal relations without encroaching upon the imperialist system and without becoming involved, in one way or another, in the revolutionary struggle which grew out of the general crisis of capitalism.

It was only possible to remove the outmoded types of relations of production in countries which had not passed through bourgeois-democratic revolutions by radical social and economic change, which ultimately would lead to the elimination of the exploiting system. Economic conditions began to form for the development of bourgeois-democratic revolution into socialist revolution. A consistent struggle against pre-capitalist forms of private ownership and exploitation inevitably undermined the foundations of imperialism and acquired an anti-imperialist bias. That happened not only in Russia, but at successive stages of the world revolutionary process, in anti-feudal revolutions. The question in any democratic revolution in the imperialist era is either to pass over to socialist revolution or to mark time or even to return to reaction. Lenin underlined that "we cannot be revolutionary democrats in the twentieth century and in a capitalist country *if we fear* to advance towards socialism".<sup>2</sup>

Indeed, the grafting of imperialism on to pre-capitalist structures and the intertwining of capitalist contradictions with those engendering democratic revolution create only an objective possibility for its growing into socialist revolution. The realisation of this possibility depends on the specific interrelationship between social and political forces, their struggle, the rate of their maturation and regrouping in the course of the struggle. That determines largely whether the

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 21, p. 379.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 25, p. 356.



democratic revolution will or will not be successful, or whether it will stop half-way; it determines the direction of the revolution, its orientation and prospects. If the bourgeoisie are able to seize the initiative, they will endeavour to restrict the aims and the substance of the revolution to capitalist relations and will collude with all reactionary forces, both in and outside the country, in order to halt the revolutionary process, change it to evolution and reformist modernisation of the most outmoded aspects of the economic and political system for the sake of preserving its basis. If the working class heads the democratic revolution, it will naturally try to deepen it, lend it a most radical character and take it beyond the classical measures of bourgeois revolution in the direction of socialism.

According to the ideologists of the Second International, the bourgeois revolution would be followed by a more or less continuous period of relatively smooth capitalist development, the maturation of objective conditions for socialist revolution and the formation of its political forces. In demolishing these dogmas, Lenin showed that conditions develop in the imperialist era, when the capitalist system as a whole is mature for proletarian revolution and the working class has become the vanguard of historical progress, so that it may play an independent role in the democratic revolution and even head it. In that event, a period of capitalist evolution would not necessarily follow in the wake of revolution. It could, as Marx and Engels had foreseen, become uninterrupted and develop into socialist revolution.

In rejecting the false scheme of the theorists of the Second International, Lenin advanced the idea of forming a political army of socialist revolution as a result of the regrouping of class forces during the course of the democratic revolution—and not after it had ended. This became possible thanks to the mounting part played by the proletariat in the revolutionary battles of the new era. The working class became a powerful force capable of influencing all the streams of the revolutionary movement, including democratic revolutions. In these circumstances, the working class could head the bourgeois-democratic revolution, take it to its logical conclusion and win, in the process, firm positions for a transfer to a direct assault on capitalism.

The idea of proletarian hegemony in the democratic revolution is crucial to the Leninist theory of the democratic revolution growing into the socialist revolution. Proletarian hegemony fulfils the role of a motive force, which ensures the continual development of democratic revolution, the stage-by-stage transition to resolving more radical tasks and the creation of conditions for advancing socialist goals. At the same time, mass forces capable of fighting for these goals group around the proletariat, the leader of revolution.

Above all, the vigorous and independent participation of the proletariat in democratic revolution, with its own programme and under the leadership of a proletarian party, at the head of a wide alliance of mass democratic forces, practically prepares the working class for its rôle as the decisive factor and the leader of the coming socialist revolution. In the thick of political battle in the democratic revolution, the working class, its individual detachments and organisations, its leaders, come to realise their power, accumulate political acumen and acquire the habits of leading the working people so as to seize political power and use it to destroy exploitation. The fight for leadership over the bourgeois-democratic revolution enables the working class, even at that stage, to judge the position of each class in the course of revolution and to foresee its possible evolution at the subsequent socialist stage. The democratic struggle not only reveals to the proletariat the political colouring of all classes and social sections of society, it enables it to appreciate and pinpoint its particular class interests. The political education of the working class, as a fighter for socialist change, therefore takes place during the democratic revolution.

At the same time, proletarian leadership in democratic revolution creates favourable conditions for rallying all revolutionary forces around the working class. The most loyal allies, prepared to join the working class in making socialist revolution, join forces with it during the democratic revolution. In revealing the conditions for the victory of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia, Lenin emphasised that, although it had not started out with socialist aims, it could not be completed successfully without democratic dictatorship by the popular masses, the "lower classes". He



wrote: "Is it not clear that it is not the proletariat alone, as distinct from the 'bourgeoisie', that is referred to here, but the 'lower classes', which are the active motive force of every democratic revolution? These classes are the proletariat *plus* the scores of millions of urban and rural poor whose conditions of existence are petty-bourgeois."<sup>1</sup>

In other words, the semi-proletarian and the most radical petty-bourgeois sections of the population, whose vital interests lie in socialist revolution, take up the most revolutionary positions along with the proletariat during democratic revolution. The special, decisive role of the working class in the democratic revolution closely binds it and the semi-proletarian masses, prepares their union in the struggle for socialist revolution against the power of capital. The future allies of the working class in the fight for socialism come closer to them during the democratic struggle and become used to seeing them as the leader. The working class and its party, in turn, acquire the skill of leadership of the popular revolutionary struggle, necessary for carrying through socialist revolution. Thus, conditions for forming political forces of socialist revolution mature within the political army of democratic revolution; the outline of a new line-up of revolutionary forces is clear for the transition to the fight for socialism immediately following the democratic revolution. Lenin wrote: "*The proletariat must carry the democratic revolution to completion, allying to itself the mass of the peasantry in order to crush the autocracy's resistance by force and paralyse the bourgeoisie's instability. The proletariat must accomplish the socialist revolution, allying to itself the mass of the semi-proletarian elements of the population, so as to crush the bourgeoisie's resistance by force and paralyse the instability of the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie.*"<sup>2</sup>

In his careful study of the political conduct of various classes and social sections during bourgeois-democratic revolution, Lenin noted that it was necessary to pick out the most resolute and consistent people among the allies of the working class in the fight for revolutionary democratic

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 8, p. 286.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 9, p. 100.

change: "We must paralyse the instability of the whole bourgeoisie, including the intellectualist and the peasant bourgeoisie. We must rally to the proletariat the poor peasantry, which is capable of waging a determined revolutionary struggle."<sup>1</sup>

During the bourgeois revolutions of the previous four centuries, the bourgeoisie's coming to power was accompanied by the disintegration of the alliance of social and political forces that had overthrown the feudal system. The bourgeoisie exploited the political inexperience of the people and the absence of a political centre capable of uniting and heading the movement, and often dealt harshly with its former allies with the help of a Thermidor reaction.

The situation changes radically when the proletariat has sufficient power to play an independent political role. Marx and Engels allowed for the fact that, during revolutionary events, the German working class would be able to lead the popular movement at conclusive stages of the bourgeois-democratic revolution and direct it against capitalist power. Even greater possibilities open up where and when the working class is able from the start to seize the leading role in the bourgeois-democratic revolution.

Proletarian leadership guarantees a certain consistency in the formation of the political forces of democratic and socialist revolutions. An alliance of socialist-minded forces begins to form, not after the completion of the democratic revolution, but in the process of struggle for the consistent resolution of democratic tasks. The development of democratic into socialist revolution is ensured by the regrouping of forces around the working class after resolving the basic tasks of the first revolution. The bourgeoisie involves a certain section of the petty bourgeoisie in the ranks hostile to revolution. But the vast majority of the working people gather even more closely around the proletariat to carry out a socialist revolution. An alliance of revolutionary forces, headed by the working class, becomes even sounder when it is free of internal class antagonisms inherent in the bloc of political forces in the bourgeois-democratic revolution.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 11, p. 255.



With the transition from the democratic stage of the struggle to the resolution of socialist tasks, the social basis of revolution expands many times because the numerous "lower classes" of society join the class struggle and have the prospect of true liberation from exploitation. The revolutionary potential of the working class and its allies rises. Proletarian leadership in the democratic revolution becomes proletarian leadership of a genuinely popular socialist revolution.

The transition to the resolution of socialist tasks and the regrouping of class forces around the proletariat, linked with the transition, represents the social essence of the development of the democratic into socialist revolution. It creates continuity of the revolutionary process. Lenin wrote: "...From the democratic revolution we shall at once, and precisely in accordance with the measure of our strength, the strength of the class-conscious and organised proletariat, begin to pass to the socialist revolution. We stand for uninterrupted revolution. We shall not stop half-way."<sup>1</sup>

In bourgeois and bourgeois-democratic revolutions under bourgeois leadership, the ascendant period has been followed by a decline. Proletarian hegemony creates conditions for continual development of the democratic revolution in a progressive direction towards socialist revolution.

The close connection between the two revolutions is reflected, too, in the character of political power. Since power is the principal issue of any revolution, the development of the democratic into socialist revolution will lead to a change in the substance of power.

In advocating uninterrupted revolution, Marx and Engels counted on the comparatively rapid change of power among the various factions of the bourgeoisie up to and including the most radical of them. These notions corresponded to the level of political maturity of the proletariat which, at that time, could not yet immediately become the leader of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. One could count on it acquiring sufficient political experience at the culminating stages of revolution so as to fulfil this role and replace the most radical Jacobinic bourgeois faction. From the Marxist

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 9, pp. 236-37.

point of view, uninterrupted revolution in regard to political power meant that an increasingly wide action by the mass movement would not allow a single faction of the bourgeoisie to cling to power for long or to stabilise its supremacy.

Proletarian hegemony in the democratic revolution opened up a different prospect for resolving the power issue. The complete victory of the bourgeois-democratic revolution under working-class leadership would enable a new transitional type of power to be implemented at once. In regard to Russia at the turn of the century, Lenin defined its class essence as the revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry.

In contrast to proletarian dictatorship, this political power does not resolve directly socialist tasks; at the same time, however, it is an instrument of constant intensification of the democratic revolution and its growth into a socialist revolution. In the initial period, this political power would consolidate the gains of democratic revolution and bring it to an end. Following this path, however, the new power would inevitably clash with the state apparatus of the old regime. A genuine victory of the democratic revolution, Lenin wrote, demanded the "utter destruction of all the loathsome institutions of autocracy, monarchy, bureaucracy, militarism and serfownership".<sup>1</sup> While the maintenance of the military-bureaucratic state apparatus for modernising and turning it into an instrument of the class domination of the bourgeoisie would serve the interests of big capital, the revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry dealt it a crushing blow and barred the way to the bourgeoisie.

The logical development of democratic revolution demanded from the revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry the implementation of social, economic and political measures (land nationalisation, syndicate nationalisation and demolition of the state institutions that evoked much popular hatred), which, not being socialist, would greatly inhibit the influence and opportunities of big capital and would prepare the ground for a transition to socialist revo-

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 412.



lution. In implementing these measures, the revolutionary democratic power would act as a lever for the development of the democratic into socialist revolution.

The revolutionary democratic dictatorship is a transitional type of power. Its social content inevitably changes with the regrouping of class forces around the proletariat during the development of the democratic into socialist revolution. The revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry, Lenin said, had its past and future. Its past was the fight against the feudal system of serfdom. The unity of the proletariat and all the peasants was possible in that struggle. Its future was the struggle for socialism and at that stage a differentiation of interests of the proletariat takes place with those of the peasants who are interested in preserving the exploiting system—i.e., the rural bourgeoisie or "kulaks". The contradiction which had been in the background at the previous stage, due to the community of democratic tasks, now came to the surface and became a source of social clashes. Lenin wrote: "Beyond the bounds of democracy there can be no question of the proletariat and the peasant bourgeoisie having a single will. Class struggle between them is inevitable, but it is in a democratic republic that this struggle will be the most thoroughgoing and widespread struggle of the people for socialism."<sup>1</sup>

The revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry has its own internal contradictions. It is to destroy the feudal system; therefore, the proletariat and peasantry as a whole, including the rural bourgeoisie, constitute its social basis. But the revolutionary democratic dictatorship in the imperialist era cannot put an end to the feudal system without encroaching upon the supremacy of monopoly capital and without creating conditions for the bourgeois-democratic revolution to develop into socialist revolution. The chief result of this contradiction is a stratification of the social basis of the proletarian-peasant dictatorship and a struggle between bourgeois and socialist elements. The bourgeois elements try to restrict the scope of revolution and stop the transition to the socialist stage. The proletarian pol-

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 9, p. 84.

icy is diametrically opposed to that of the bourgeoisie. If the proletariat plays the leading part in the democratic revolution and if it can unite around itself other revolutionary forces, whose class nature enables them to accept a socialist orientation, then, from the standpoint of internal conditions, the victory of the workers' policy is guaranteed in the very development of the revolutionary democratic dictatorship. A strengthening of the leading part played by the working class and its political party in the revolutionary dictatorship prepares the way for working-class dictatorship, which consistently resolves the tasks of socialist revolution. In a reference to this prospect, Lenin called the proletarian-peasant dictatorship "the beginning of the conquest of political power by the proletariat relying on the revolutionary petty bourgeoisie, particularly the peasantry."<sup>1</sup> The revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry is essentially, as history shows, a transitional step to the dictatorship by the working class.

In revealing the dialectical growth of the democratic into socialist revolution, Lenin also showed the theoretical poverty and political harm of the eclectic views of petty-bourgeois revolutionaries who mechanically identify the two different revolutions. Such views include the Trotskyist theory of permanent revolution, which latter-day bourgeois "experts" on Marxism identify with Leninist views.

Leftist groups in the labour and national liberation movement still nurture elements and echoes of Trotskyist ideas in rejecting the natural continuity of stages of the revolutionary process, proclaiming a policy of adventurist leaps. This cautions us to recall that the Leninist theory of the growth of the democratic into socialist revolution arose and developed in a fierce polemic with Trotskyism.

The theory of permanent revolution was first advanced by Parvus and Trotsky during the First Russian Revolution (1905-1907). The seeming radicalism of the theory concealed the confusion of the petty-bourgeois ideologists when faced with the problem of theoretically substantiating the new phenomena, their inability to cope with the dialectics of revolutionary processes in the new era and their inclination

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 16, p. 168.



to adventurism and revolutionary phrase-mongering. The starting point of the Trotskyist theory of permanent revolution is the Menshevik rejection of the revolutionary role of the peasants in a democratic revolution, the rejection of the ability of the proletariat to lead this revolution, lack of faith in the possibility of a firm alliance between the working class and the peasants. Trotsky wrote about an allegedly definite isolation of the proletariat and maintained that the working class, in the course of revolution, would come into hostile confrontation with the broad mass of the peasants. In agreeing with the Mensheviks' judgement of the peasants, he asserted that the revolutionary role played by the petty bourgeoisie and peasants is diminishing. Hence his conclusion that the proletariat should seize power at once. Together with Parvus, Trotsky put forward the adventurist slogan of "workers' government" and "workers' democracy", bypassing the objectively necessary stage of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. This slogan completely spurned the revolutionary potential of the peasants and disorientated the working class.

Lenin attacked the Trotskyist theory of permanent revolution and revealed the reactionary utopia of the "workers' democracy" slogan. He wrote that "only a revolutionary dictatorship supported by the vast majority of the people can be at all durable. . . . The Russian proletariat, however, is at present a minority of the population in Russia."<sup>1</sup> In putting forward the adventurist and demagogic slogan of "workers' government without a tsar", the Trotskyists did not reckon with the reality of the democratic stage of the Russian Revolution. Lenin remarked, "Trotsky's major mistake is that he ignores the bourgeois character of the revolution and has no clear conception of the transition from this revolution to the socialist revolution."<sup>2</sup>

The Marxist idea of uninterrupted revolution presupposes a certain continuity of stages of the revolutionary struggle, each of which prepared the necessary conditions for transition to the next stage; Trotsky opposed this with his vulgar subjectivist concept of "combined development" which ig-

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 8, p. 291.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 15, p. 371.

nored the objective laws of the revolutionary process and arbitrarily confused all its stages. This concept served as a theoretical substantiation of the Trotskyist voluntarist policy, which completely broke with the Marxist strategy of broad class alliances. Lenin exposed the eclectic nature of the concept: "From the Bolsheviks Trotsky's original theory has borrowed their call for a decisive proletarian revolutionary struggle and for the conquest of political power by the proletariat."<sup>1</sup> Being revolutionary in words, this theory coincided in deeds with the Menshevik and liberal-bourgeois policy. "Trotsky is in fact helping the liberal-labour politicians in Russia, who by 'repudiation' of the role of the peasantry understand a *refusal* to raise up the peasants for the revolution."<sup>2</sup>

Lenin's theory of the development of the democratic into socialist revolution was confirmed by the Russian Revolution in October 1917. This triumph significantly enriched the theory. In summing up the experience of the Russian Revolution from February to October 1917, Lenin showed that in an acute crisis in the capitalist system, the need matures for profound democratic changes which objectively acquire the importance of "measures for the transition to socialism."<sup>3</sup> Referring to such measures as the nationalisation of the land, banks, syndicates and control over them by the Soviets, Lenin wrote that this "will *still not* be socialism, but it will *no longer* be capitalism. It will be a tremendous *step towards* socialism."<sup>4</sup>

The fight for these democratic changes serves as a powerful means of convincing the public of the need for socialist revolution and for preparing for it. The inability of different factions of the bourgeoisie to carry out these mature demands has shown the people in practice that there is only one way out of the crisis—socialist revolution. Once it has taken place, the revolution will resolve the unfinished tasks of the democratic revolution.

Lenin's theory of the growth of the democratic into socialist revolution has been a valuable contribution to Marx-

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 21, p. 419.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 420.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 26, p. 169.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 360.



ism-Leninism. It was borne out and enriched by the experience of the revolutionary movement in several European and Asian socialist states, and later in Cuba. In each of these countries, naturally, the revolutionary process has had its specific characteristics. In many of them, the economic and political conditions for the development of the democratic into socialist revolution were formed during the tackling both of anti-feudal tasks and of tasks of the anti-fascist and anti-imperialist struggle that lie behind democratic revolution. Today's profound historical trend towards an increasing assimilation of the two revolutions has led to a situation where, in some European countries, the democratic and socialist changes have become closely intertwined and essentially represent two stages of a single revolutionary process. Revolution in some East European states took a socialist character from the initial stages, also resolving tasks of democratic struggle.

The Leninist theory is as topical as ever. Above all, it is relevant to countries where far-reaching democratic revolutions are maturing, aimed against outmoded economic structures and the coercion of foreign imperialism and, at the same time, where capitalism is considerably developed; consequently, in one way or another, the material and technological prerequisites for socialism have matured.

The Leninist theory is relevant, too, to countries in the zone of the national liberation movement. The triumphant outcome of these revolutions opens up wide possibilities for progressive social and economic change for the countries liberated from colonialism. This is the path of socialist orientation. It prepares conditions ultimately for a transition to socialism through a series of intermediate stages. Finally, even in the developed capitalist states for which the era of bourgeois-democratic revolution is long past, Lenin's propositions about proletarian leadership in the struggle for democratic changes and the regrouping of social and political forces around the working class at various stages of the revolutionary movement have immense importance today. Here, the anti-imperialist struggle for resolving democratic tasks is becoming a vital form of approach and transition to socialist revolution.

## 2. Campaign for Democracy as a Component of the Campaign for Socialism

In essence, imperialism is anti-democratic and everywhere engenders a tendency towards reaction under all political regimes. Monopoly domination hostile to social interests is incompatible with genuine democracy. That is why, Lenin wrote, "the political superstructure of this new economy, of monopoly capitalism ... is the change from democracy to political reaction".<sup>1</sup>

In his speech at the 1969 Meeting, L. I. Brezhnev noted that "as a social system imperialism has been and remains the chief obstacle to mankind's historically inevitable advance to the triumph of freedom, peace and democracy".<sup>2</sup>

The monopolies stand opposed not only to the working class; they are increasingly opposed to the entire people. The trend towards reaction, which is inherent in monopoly capitalism, intensifies the contradiction between the monopolies and the people and "the antagonism between imperialism's denial of democracy and the mass striving for democracy".<sup>3</sup> The powerful upsurge in the popular movement for democratic liberties, peace, national liberation and the destruction of medieval forms of enslavement, and against violence and militarism is typical of the contemporary era.

The democratic movement has different forms and nuances: the peasant movement against the vestiges of feudalism, the farmers' movement against monopoly coercion in agriculture, the patriotic struggle for national independence and national sovereignty, the defence of democratic freedoms, the fight against fascism and reaction, the struggle for peace and against the threat of a thermonuclear war, the student protest against backward educational systems, the pacifist movements, and so on. What unites all these movements is their anti-imperialism; they do not have directly socialist aims. Their participants come from different classes and sections of the population, they have different convic-

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, p. 43.

<sup>2</sup> *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow 1969*, p. 141.

<sup>3</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, p. 25.



tions and faiths, and at times merely have a vague notion of scientific socialism, or none at all. But they are all united in their desire to oppose imperialist reaction.

Being an ideologist of the proletarian movement—the most profound and advanced popular movement in history—Lenin displayed immense interest in all forms of liberation and democratic popular struggle. He advocated that the working class should not remain indifferent to the mass democratic movements and had to take an active part in them, linking them with the struggle for socialist objectives. The proletariat, as the most consistent fighter for liberating society from all forms of oppression, is a champion of democracy. Therefore, the proletarian party supports any democratic movement, even when it seems far from the aims and tasks of the proletarian class struggle. No matter whether they are student protests, army mutinies, peasant uprisings or peace campaigns, democratic movements are ultimately and objectively directed against the social system which cultivates inequality and oppression—against capitalism. They extend the front of the anti-capitalist struggle headed by the working class. For this reason, the proletariat supports these movements and is even more interested in their success than are the social sections and groups which get direct benefit from the movement.

Marx and Engels were the first to show the connection between the proletarian class struggle and the fight for democracy. They noted that if functionaries of workers' parties ignored democratic tasks they would forfeit any mass basis. They clearly saw that the success of democratic movements in capitalist states depended on the proletariat's participation in them. Conversely, the destiny of socialism very much depended on the scope of the democratic movements.

Developing the ideas of Marx and Engels, Lenin pointed out that one should not look at the demands for democracy in an abstract way, divorced from a specific historical era. When capitalism was in its infancy, popular democratic movements were mainly directed against feudalism and they were objectively part of the bourgeois revolution. In the new era, imperialism was the main source and stronghold of reaction. Objectively, the acuteness of democratic move-

ments for political freedoms, peace and national independence is today directed against imperialism. Even the mass movements born of attempts to do away with outmoded feudal and semi-feudal relations and institutions become anti-imperialist, because monopoly capitalism not only creates new forms of exploitation of the people, but it "restores their old forms on a 'modern' basis".<sup>1</sup> Under the new circumstances, democracy in any aspect of social affairs is attainable only in the struggle against the oppression of the monopolies and against imperialism.

The domination of the monopolies has to be destroyed for democratic demands to be implemented fully and consistently. The popular masses are capable of resolving this task only under the leadership of the proletariat, the most advanced class of the era; it can be fully resolved only on the path to socialism. Lenin wrote: "Not a single fundamental democratic demand can be achieved to any considerable extent, or with any degree of permanency, in the advanced imperialist states, except through revolutionary battles under the banner of socialism".<sup>2</sup> The profound internal unity of the democratic struggle and the struggle for socialism represents a law of development of the revolutionary movement today and is one of the central notions of the Leninist theory of socialist revolution.

Even in the restricted form in which it exists in bourgeois society, democracy is a great gain of the working people. It proclaims important political rights and freedoms: universal suffrage, freedom of speech, of assembly and of the press, the possibility for political parties and organisations to be set up and to operate, etc. Lenin wrote that one cannot imagine democracy without representative institutions.<sup>3</sup> By themselves, however, democratic forms, reinforced by constitutional rights and freedoms, do not provide sufficient justification for considering them an expression of effective popular government. Everything depends on how real they are, in whose interests they are used, whom they enable to cling to power and whether they in fact serve the popular

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 95.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 167-68.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 25, p. 424.



masses. In other words, any democracy is primarily characterised by a certain class content.

In capitalist society, where economic relations between people are founded on the principles of private ownership and the capitalist exploitation of labour, democracy inevitably remains formal and restricted. It cannot ensure equal rights for all members of society, nor can it remove the political domination of the bourgeoisie. Lenin noted: "Full freedom, election of all officials all the way to the head of the state, will not do away with the rule of capital, will not abolish the wealth of the few and the poverty of the masses."<sup>1</sup> Capital has the ability to adjust itself to any form of democracy, to use a myriad of devices to drain it of any real meaning and to subordinate it to its own interests. Lenin wrote: "In general, political democracy is merely one of the possible forms of superstructure above capitalism (although it is theoretically the normal one for 'pure' capitalism). The facts show that both capitalism and imperialism develop within the framework of any political form and subordinate them all."<sup>2</sup> One can arrive at a real, actual and not a formal democracy only through revolutionary incursions into property relations and through the destruction of capitalist or any other form of exploitation of man by man. Consequently, the establishment of genuine democracy demands a socialist transformation of society, a socialist revolution.

Lenin mocked the dreams of the followers of Kautsky, or pure democracy on the basis of capitalist society. In response to their accusations that the Bolsheviks had no democratic programme, Lenin wrote: "Oh no, gentlemen. . . . We are in favour of democratic demands, we alone are fighting for them sincerely, for because of the objective historical situation they cannot be advanced except in connection with the socialist revolution."<sup>3</sup>

The profound connection between the democratic and the socialist struggle also hinges on the fact that socialist revolution cannot develop in isolation from democratic movements. The maturing of the socialist revolution, the forma-

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 10, p. 42.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 22, p. 326.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 165.

tion and training of its political forces are indivisible from the growth of the mass democratic struggle. It is ridiculous to put forward notions that democratic changes can delay the socialist revolution. Lenin noted on this issue that "it would be a radical mistake to think that the struggle for democracy was capable of diverting the proletariat from the socialist revolution or of hiding, overshadowing it, etc".<sup>1</sup>

How is the influence of the general democratic movement expressed in the struggle for socialist revolution? Actively participating in the struggle for democracy, the working class gains a political education and attracts revolutionary democratic elements to its side. The proletariat certainly could not beat the bourgeoisie if it was not educated in the spirit of revolutionary democratism. The proletariat cannot gain the backing of the bulk of the population for socialist revolution if it is remote from the struggle for democracy, peace and national independence, that is so close and understandable to the popular masses. The proletariat itself is capable of appreciating the tasks of socialist revolution and its role as leader of that revolution only by actively participating in the democratic movement.

By attaining democratic gains, the working class clears the arena for class struggle and brings the hour of the decisive battle with capitalism nearer. Lenin underlined the fact that "the more democratic the system of government, the clearer will the workers see that the root evil is capitalism, not lack of rights. The fuller national equality. . . the clearer will the workers of the oppressed nations see that the cause of their oppression is capitalism, not lack of rights".<sup>2</sup> Despite the class restriction of democracy in capitalist society, the working class can utilise it for reinforcing its attack on the power of capital. Lenin wrote: "No democracy in the world can eliminate the class struggle and the omnipotence of money. It is not this that makes democracy important and useful. The importance of democracy is that it makes the class struggle broad, open and conscious. And this is not a conjecture or a wish, but a fact."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 144.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 23, p. 73.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 18, p. 335.



Democracy under capitalism contains its own inner contradiction. On the one hand, it is a form of political domination of the bourgeoisie. On the other, it gives the proletariat a chance to conduct the class struggle legally, using the rights and liberties that it has won. Naturally, the bourgeoisie tries to keep this possibility down to a minimum; but this depends not on it alone, but on the actual balance of class forces both in a given country and in the world as a whole. Given a favourable balance of power, the working class can launch an attack to lend democratic rights and liberties real meaning, to strengthen its influence in the various sectors of the prevailing state system, primarily in its representative bodies and to restrict the power of the monopolies.

Taken by itself, this struggle will not lead to socialism. Lenin tirelessly criticised such reformist illusions. Looked at in the general context of the workers' fight for socialist revolution, for the attraction to it of the working people, it prepares the ground for the struggle for socialism: it exposes the reactionary essence of the bourgeois state, proves the need for dismantling the military-bureaucratic coercive apparatus and enables the working class, in the fight against the monopolies, to combine actions from below, from mass organisations, with actions from above, from those sectors of the bourgeois democratic system in which progressive anti-imperialist forces have managed to gain a firm foothold.

The struggle for democracy, for extending it and actually implementing the formally proclaimed rights cannot be opposed to the battle for socialism. Political changes in a really democratic direction, Lenin taught, clear the way for socialist revolution, "bring it closer, extend its basis, and draw new sections of the petty bourgeoisie and the semi-proletarian masses into the socialist struggle".<sup>1</sup> As was said in the Document of the 1969 Meeting, "in contrast to the Right and 'Left' opportunists, the Communist and Workers' Parties do not counterpose the fight for deep-going economic and social demands, and for advanced democracy to the struggle for socialism, but regard it as a part of the struggle for socialism. The radical democratic changes which will be achieved in the struggle against the monopolies and their economic domi-

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 339.

nation and political power will promote among the broad masses awareness of the need for socialism."<sup>1</sup>

The struggle for democracy and the struggle for socialism, being closely intertwined, mutually stimulate one another. The successes of socialism, the steady growth in the political power and influence of the international proletariat, the victory of socialist revolutions in a number of states and the appearance and strengthening of the world socialist system have opened up new prospects for the various streams of the democratic movement, have enabled many of them to achieve solid victories and to defend their gains from imperialist encroachments. In turn, the struggle for democracy in its numerous manifestations prepares the ground for socialist changes and serves as a bridge to socialist revolution. The Leninist ideas of the struggle for democracy as a form of approach and transition to socialist revolution are part of the armoury of the Marxist-Leninist parties in the capitalist states.

The Theses of the Düsseldorf Congress of the German Communist Party in November 1971 allow for the possibility of winning "anti-monopolist democracy" on the way to socialism.<sup>2</sup> Further, in an article on the results of the 20th Convention of the Communist Party of Canada, William Kashtan, the Party's secretary, wrote: "The struggle to extend democracy... constitutes an important link between radicalisation and the struggle for revolutionary change of society."<sup>3</sup> The communist parties of other capitalist states have also put forward programmes of far-reaching democratic changes.

At its 32nd Congress, in November 1971, the Communist Party of Great Britain defined the class battles of recent years as a shift to the Left in the British trade union movement and towards concerted action of the trade unions; they noted a growing mood of disassociation from class collaboration with the bourgeoisie within the Labour Party. This was apparent above all in the advancing of political demands

<sup>1</sup> *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow 1969*, p. 24.

<sup>2</sup> See: *Thesen des Düsseldorf Parteitag der Deutschen Kommunistischen Partei. Beitrag zu Unsere Zeit*, 7 Aug., 1971.

<sup>3</sup> W. Kashtan, "The 20th Convention of the Communist Party of Canada", *World Marxist Review* No. 7, 1969, p. 40.



and slogans in the fight against British entry into the Common Market, for an immediate end to the war in Vietnam (viz., the TUC General Council Declaration of August 24, 1972); against the industrial relations act (the TUC call for an official general strike to free the five dockers imprisoned by the industrial tribunal); against unjustified factory closures (an opposition supported by the whole organised labour movement which also backed the successful struggle of the Upper Clyde shipyard workers in 1972); the fight of Left-wing forces in the trade unions to remove the ban, introduced in the 1920's, on Communists representing trade unions at Labour Party conferences, and opposition to legislation on immigrants.

The Congress also underlined the fact, that the political tasks and wider involvement of white-collar workers in the trade union movement required stronger unity of action of the working class and other sections of the working people to create a wide popular alliance against monopoly capital. The marked swing of the trade union movement to the Left was reflected also at the TUC Congress in September 1972 when the ban on Communists attending the annual TUC conferences on a regional basis was unanimously revoked.

New opportunities are opening up as a result of a move to the Left of a part of the US trade unions. The US Communist Party Programme of 1970 and the draft theses for its 20th National Congress in 1972 spoke of the growing actions by rank-and-file union members as a reaction against the inability of the Right-wing leaders of the trade union movement to tackle the immediate problems of the workers. The draft theses stress that this movement from below is a weapon of struggle for replacing the class collaboration policy with the policy of class struggle. The growth in conglomerate corporations makes it necessary for the movement to alter the organisational structure of the trade unions and to extend trade union democracy for joint action within the framework of trade union unity, a growth in the actions of the ever increasing number of white-collar workers within the trade unions, the political tenor of the economic struggle by blue- and white-collar workers, the campaign for civil rights and the satisfaction of social and economic needs; all this demonstrates the growing need to create and organise a Left-

wing sector in the trade union movement for opposing the reactionary policy of the Right-wing leadership.

William Kashtan, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Canada, speaking at the 21st Party Convention in November 1971, said that a tendency to undertake more effective measures to strengthen the unity and solidarity within union ranks for the purpose of creating a united trade union movement independent of the Right-wing American union leaders was noticeable in the Canadian trade union movement. This trend was demonstrated by the admission, in 1971, to the Canadian Labour Congress of the Communist-led electricians' and fishermen's unions and the creation of a united trade union front, etc.

A united front of trade unions of different political colourings in Italy, France and Japan become a fact and is one reason for the recent successes gained in the struggle for workers' rights.

Capitalist integration leads to the economic internationalisation of individual states and the increasing role of international companies in the world economy; this poses an urgent problem to the international trade union movement. Such facts as growing international exploitation, which gives the working people of different countries identical anti-monopoly economic and social problems, the growing influence of Communists in national trade unions and the swing to the Left of these trade unions, the participation of Communists with socialists and social democrats involved in the movement for unity of the Left, and the rising class consciousness of the working people, etc., are all evidence of mounting success.

The international trade union movement is, as before, divided into three separate organisations, and is now passing a new stage in its history, marked by greater concerted action and growing strength.

The 1969 Meeting summed up the experience of the world communist movement: "In the course of anti-monopolist and anti-imperialist united action, favourable conditions are created for uniting all democratic trends into a political alliance capable of decisively limiting the role played by the monopolies in the economies of the countries concerned, of putting an end to the power of big capital and of bringing



about such radical political and economic changes as would ensure the most favourable conditions for continuing the struggle for socialism."<sup>1</sup>

Modern ideologists of "Left"-wing opportunism proclaim the struggle for democracy as reformism and opportunism. They advocate some form of "pure" socialist revolution. This idea resurrects the old concept of "all or nothing" advanced during World War I by Trotskyists and Bukharin group. The idea behind the concept was to reject democratic demands as distracting the proletariat from socialist revolution. Lenin subjected these sectarian views to severe criticism. In a reply to P. Kievsky (the pseudonym of G. Pyatakov), who was proposing a rejection of the democratic programme and a preoccupation with narrowly understood slogans for the workers, Lenin wrote: "The democratic part of our programme—Kievsky has given no thought to its significance 'in general'—is addressed specifically to the whole people and that is why in it we speak of the 'people'."<sup>2</sup>

Lenin exposed the utter inconsistency of the ideas that democratic demands were impracticable under capitalism. These demands above all relate to politics and the superstructure. Their practicability, or impracticability, therefore, depends on the balance of class forces, the scope and intensity of the fight of revolutionary classes against reaction. Notions that democratic changes cannot be implemented are essentially a ploy by opportunists to disguise the fact that they are shirking their duty in the face of monopoly capitalism. When these "Left"-wing opportunists speak of the impracticability of democratic demands, they keep quiet about their impracticability without a decisive and stubborn battle against the reactionary tendencies of imperialism and without a series of revolutions. In opposition to the opportunists, Lenin demanded that this question should be put in a revolutionary way, in relation to the coming struggle for socialism.

The hostility of monopoly capitalism to democracy, Lenin explained, should lead not to a renunciation of the demo-

<sup>1</sup> *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow 1969*, p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, p. 64.

cratic programme but to the development of a truly revolutionary mass struggle for democratic changes as a stage in the preparation of and transition to a wider assault on the power of capital and to socialist revolution. He wrote: "To develop democracy *to the utmost*, to find the *forms* for this development, to test them *by practice*, and so forth—all this is one of the component tasks of the struggle for the social revolution. Taken separately, no kind of democracy will bring socialism. But in actual life democracy will never be 'taken separately'; it will be 'taken together' with other things, it will exert its influence on economic life as well, will stimulate *its* transformation; and in its turn it will be influenced by economic development, and so on."<sup>1</sup>

Lenin examined the concept of the "Left"-wing opportunists as a new version of economism which contained a lack of faith in the power of the proletariat and in the ability of the revolutionary movement to force the monopoly bourgeoisie to meet the democratic demands made upon it. The "Left"-wing doctrinaires would have liked the world triumph of socialism at once and without any preparation. Behind their fine-sounding revolutionary praises they concealed their complete helplessness to resolve any specific revolutionary tasks. Their tactics, in Lenin's words, were reduced to "waiting for 'great days' along with an inability to master the forces which create great events."<sup>2</sup>

The gathering of mass forces for socialist revolution is unthinkable without the working-class party conducting a policy of broad class alliances and concerted action with the various parties and organisations behind whom are the democratically motivated masses. In the period of preparation for the October Socialist Revolution, Lenin bent his efforts to obtain just such concerted action with the political forces which had wavered and been inconsistent. Being irreconcilable to the policy of collusion of the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries, Lenin nevertheless sought forces even in these parties who would break with the policy of class collaboration and enter an alliance with the Bolsheviks on a revolutionary platform of struggle against the bour-

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 25, pp. 452-53.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 16, p. 349.



geoisie and for the transition of all power to the Soviets. He stressed that such an alliance would create wide possibilities for the successful development of revolution: "If there is an absolutely undisputed lesson of the revolution, one fully proved by facts, it is that only an alliance of the Bolsheviks with the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, only an immediate transfer of all power to the Soviets would make civil war in Russia impossible."<sup>1</sup> In evaluating the lessons of the revolt by the monarchist General Kornilov, Lenin wrote: "An alliance of the Bolsheviks with the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks against the Cadets, against the bourgeoisie, *has not yet been tried*; or, to be more precise, such an alliance *has been tried on one front only, for five days only, from August 26th to August 31st, the period of the Kornilov revolt, and this alliance at that time scored a victory over the counter-revolution with an ease never yet achieved in any revolution*; it was such a crushing suppression of the bourgeois, landowners', capitalist, Allied-imperialist and Cadet counter-revolution, that the civil war *from that side* ceased to exist, was a mere nothing from the very outset, collapsed before any 'battle' had taken place."<sup>2</sup>

Lenin's proposals for unity of action on an anti-bourgeois platform, however, were rejected by the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, who had become hopelessly lost in compromise. These parties were incapable of disentangling themselves from the bourgeoisie and thereby became condemned to political obscurity. The Bolshevik policy of united action with all forces capable of opposing the bourgeoisie brought its fruits. The democratic forces allied themselves around the Leninist party. As Lenin wrote, Bolshevism "drew to itself all that was best in the trends of socialist thought akin to it and rallied round itself the *entire* vanguard of the proletariat and the *overwhelming majority* of the working people."<sup>3</sup>

In the course of World War II and the liberation from fascism in several parts of Eastern and Central Europe, Left-wing social democrats and other democratic parties man-

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 36.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 30, pp. 55-56.

aged to consolidate themselves around the Communists and take part in the opposition to fascism and internal reaction. The unity of action of these parties with the Communists on a revolutionary platform led to the creation, under the leadership of communist parties, of a broad alliance of democratic forces. This had great importance for the successful outcome of socialist revolution in those countries.

The communist parties in capitalist states follow the Leninist strategy and are stubbornly fighting for concerted action with democratic forces and parties against imperialism and the power of monopoly capital. The 1969 Meeting declared that "*the Communist and Workers' Parties represented at the Meeting, aware of their historic responsibility, propose united action to all Communists of the world, to all opponents of imperialism, to all who are prepared to fight for peace, freedom, and progress*".<sup>1</sup>

In upholding the policy of joint action and coordination between the political vanguard of the working class and democratic parties, Lenin resolutely advocated the political and organisational independence of the proletarian movement and the leading role of the working-class revolutionary party. He stressed that the unity of the democratic and proletarian movements in the fight against imperialism did not signify their fusion. Such fusion would lead to the working class forfeiting its leadership in the anti-imperialist struggle and the subordination of the tasks of socialist revolution to the limited aims of individual democratic movements, whose participants often do not appreciate enough the actual objective substance of their struggle and its link with the campaign for socialism.

The consolidation of the democratic and socialist forces is a complex and contradictory process. Democratic movements are never conspicuous by their class homogeneity and monolithic political attitudes. Within the democratic movement there are both socialist and anti-socialist trends between which contradictions and struggle exist. The alliance of democratic and socialist forces develops as a result of the overcoming of the internal contradictions of the demo-

<sup>1</sup> *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow 1969*, p. 30.



cratic movement. A politically clear, firm and independent stance by the proletariat is a major condition for overcoming these contradictions and for allying the democratic and socialist forces. Complete fusion with the democratic movement would be detrimental to the proletarian struggle for socialism and the struggle for democracy, by weakening opposition to anti-socialist tendencies.

A consistent struggle for democracy requires stronger organisation and solidarity of the working class and the winning of leadership over the democratic movement. There lies a principal guarantee for the solid basis of democratic gains and their conversion into strong points of the revolutionary struggle for socialism.

Lenin emphatically condemned the proletariat diluting its socialist tasks in the democratic movement, no matter how wide and progressive it might be. In a letter to Inessa Armand, he wrote: "Proletarians should never 'merge' with the general democratic movement... We Bolsheviks did not 'merge' with the bourgeois-democratic movement in 1905."<sup>1</sup>

In 1916, Lenin criticised an article by Zinoviev in which the socialist tasks were reduced to general democratic tasks. Zinoviev held that the demands of the party's minimum programme signified the transition to a completely new social system. Lenin pointed to the incorrect treatment by Zinoviev of the question of reforms, of the minimum programme and of democracy. The minimum programme, which included democratic demands, was, in principle, compatible with capitalism. By itself, it could not lead to socialism. A socialist revolution was necessary: "Never is a 'transition to basically different social system' achieved *either* by the definite demands of the minimum programme... *or the sum total* of the minimum-programme demands. To think so is to move over to the reformist position in principle and to abandon the standpoint of the socialist revolution."<sup>2</sup>

The question was actively to participate in the fight for democracy but always to subordinate the task of this struggle to the tasks of socialist revolution. Lenin wrote: "One

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 35, p. 249.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 41, pp. 384-85.

should know how to *combine* the struggle for democracy and the struggle for the socialist revolution, *subordinating* the first to the second. In this lies the whole difficulty; in this is the whole essence." He further noted: "Don't lose sight of the *main* thing (the socialist revolution); put it first... put *all* the democratic demands, but subordinating them to it, coordinating them with it... and bear in mind that the struggle for the main thing may blaze up even though it has begun with the struggle for something partial. In my opinion, only this conception of the matter is the right one."<sup>1</sup>

One must bear in mind, however, that the extension of democracy by itself under capitalism cannot automatically bring socialism. For that, one needs above all to change the class substance of state power. A political revolution stands between socialist democracy and bourgeois democracy, no matter how broad it might be; the working class must win complete power, demolish the bourgeois state-coercive machine and establish proletarian dictatorship. The further the working class and its allies advance along the road of extending democracy and its use in the interests of the working people, the more stubborn the resistance of the monopoly bourgeoisie will be. It is obvious that when the struggle unfolds directly for control of the main levers of power, the bourgeoisie will attempt to resort to all the means at its disposal for holding on to the key positions of power. Therefore, the revisionist hopes of gaining power through parliamentary methods alone are futile. In order to break down bourgeois resistance one needs a broad development of the mass movement that will create a revolutionary situation making it possible to implement far-going changes and socialist revolution. Only in those circumstances can the working class break down and paralyse the resistance of the bourgeoisie, balk its counter-revolutionary attempts and guarantee the transfer of all power to the working class.

The working people have made considerable gains in many capitalist states within the bourgeois legal system. These successes are used by revisionists for spreading reformist and Right-wing opportunist illusions about the possible transi-

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 35, pp. 267-68.



tion to socialism within the bounds of bourgeois democracy by perfecting the latter.

Revisionists turn a blind eye to the class content of democracy. Of course, the positions taken by the working class under bourgeois democracy are very important for it, they undermine the power of the monopolies and serve as a spring-board for struggle. On the whole, however, the class substance of the bourgeois state and judiciary remains the same. A revolution is needed to change it, and this can only be a socialist revolution. This revolution dispenses with the limited framework of bourgeois democracy and paves the way for socialist democracy which expresses the genuine interests of the working class and all working people.

A period of acute struggle for power, of crisis in the old government as a result of the mass movement against capitalists and monopolists is therefore inevitable in replacing bourgeois by socialist democracy. The transfer of all power to the working class is a necessary qualitative stage of the transition from capitalism to socialism. Despite the great importance of other stages on the way to socialist revolution, they merely prepare the decisive stage of gaining complete power.

Right-wing reformists and "Left"-wing anarchist opportunists are incapable of understanding this dialectics of the revolutionary transfer from capitalism to socialism. Right-wing revisionists regard the preparatory stages for revolution as already the implementation of socialism. They forget about the revolutionary leap. "Left"-wing revisionists conceal themselves behind revolutionary phrases, but show a complete incomprehension of the importance of specific intermediate stages on the way to this goal. In the words of Lenin, both the one and the other "constantly exaggerate, elevate to a one-sided theory, to a one-sided system of tactics, now one and now another feature of capitalist development, now one and now another 'lesson' of this development. . . But real life, real history, *includes* these different tendencies, just as life and development in nature include both slow evolution and rapid leaps, breaks in continuity."<sup>1</sup>

Marxists consider the struggle for democracy a component

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 16, p. 349.

part of the struggle for socialism. That means that even the most far-reaching democratic changes cannot by themselves bring socialism. They can only prepare the revolutionary leap, influence the form of transition to socialism and become its initial phase; but they can in no circumstances affect the need for socialist change and socialist revolution.

The experience of the revolutionary movement exposes the false notions of the anti-communists in regard to the incompatibility and even alien nature of democracy and socialism; this experience convinces all democrats that the only path to achieving genuine democracy is the path leading to the abolition of the oppression of the monopolies and the elimination of the exploitative system, the path to socialist revolution. There is nothing more ridiculous than to counterpose democracy to socialism. The proletarian revolution brings about the most profound democratic changes. It destroys exploitation and frees the vast majority of mankind from economic, social, political and spiritual slavery, and brings the fullest and most comprehensive democracy. Lenin wrote: "Capitalism cannot be vanquished without *taking over the banks*, without repealing *private ownership* of the means of production. These revolutionary measures, however, cannot be implemented without organising the entire people for democratic administration of the means of production captured from the bourgeoisie, without enlisting the entire mass of the working people, the proletarians, semi-proletarians and small peasants, for the democratic organisations of their ranks, their forces, their participation in state affairs."<sup>1</sup> The very nature of socialist change demands active participation of the widest sections of the working people. In the process of its emergence and development, socialism releases the mighty energy of popular creativity which had been held back for ages by a thousand bonds of the domination of the exploiting classes.

The socialist revolution is deeply democratic by its very nature. This brings it closer to the democratic movements of today. Each democratic movement puts forward some particular democratic objectives, often merely half-way and unconnected with the abolition of capitalism. The socialist

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 23, p. 25.



revolution puts forward the entire complex of democratic demands and closely couples them with the task of the complete annihilation of all exploitation—i.e., with the problem of creating conditions for genuine democracy on the basis of popular power. The fight for democratic ideals develops apace with the actual liberation of man and mankind from social and national oppression and the attraction of all and sundry to active, politically conscious participation in the regular administration of social processes.

When the proletariat unites the numerous streams of the democratic movement and directs them into social revolution, it puts this movement on the only lines leading to the fullest and most consistent implementation of democratic aims.

## CHAPTER IX

### SOCIALIST REVOLUTION AND THE NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENT

#### 1. Leninism and the Part Played by the National Liberation Movement in World Revolution

Never in history has a popular movement for national liberation attained such a scale as in the 20th century. Never has history presented the fighters for national independence such a favourable international situation which has resulted from the victory of socialism, first in a single country and then in several states. And never have national liberation revolutions been so successful as in the era of the transition from capitalism to socialism.

This historical trend towards an expansion of the international front of national liberation movements and revolutions was analysed by Lenin, who established that the scattered protests of individual peoples, nations, ethnic groups and tribes enslaved by imperialism would converge into a powerful, purposive, revolutionary stream of struggle for national equality and national independence. More and more people are being drawn into this struggle against the capitalist system of colonial tyranny which for long hampered the development of many peoples and whole continents. Nationalities that yesterday were forgotten and disenfranchised in the colonies and dependencies began to play, from the turn of the century, an increasingly active part in human history. This change in the scale of national liberation movements and the deepening of their social content only became possible in the era of transition from capitalism to socialism; it was directly connected with the maturation and development of world socialist revolution.

Theoretically, it was Marx and Engels who initially dealt with the question of the essence of the national liberation



movement, the interrelation of the struggle for national and social emancipation and the importance of the struggle against colonial oppression.

Marx and Engels believed that national oppression would be ended only by socialist revolution. They were firm opponents of colonialism and supporters of the national liberation struggle of oppressed peoples in India, China and elsewhere; they indicated the close and indissoluble link between the social emancipation of the proletariat in the metropolitan countries and the abolition of colonialism. As Marx wrote, "any nation that oppresses another forges its own chains".<sup>1</sup> The colonial peoples were regarded by Marx and Engels as the natural ally of the working class in the revolutionary struggle against the world bourgeoisie.

Lenin, in developing the idea of the place and role of the national liberation movement in world revolution during the era of imperialism, socialist and national liberation revolutions, elaborated the theory and tactics of national liberation revolutions as a component part of world socialist revolution and substantiated the inevitability of their triumph and of the downfall of the imperialist colonial system.

He called upon the international working class to give vigorous support to the national liberation movement, stressing that the revolutionary proletariat should not only demand the immediate freedom of the colonies, but should itself, in the most resolute way, support the most revolutionary elements of the national liberation movements and help them in their struggle against the imperialist powers. The Communist International, founded by Lenin, proclaimed the liberation of colonial peoples one of its central tasks. The leader of the world proletariat saw natural allies of the international working class in the peoples downtrodden by imperialism. Lenin said that in the Eastern countries "the majority of the people for the first time begin to act independently and will be an active factor in the fight to overthrow international imperialism".<sup>2</sup> He noted further: "The

<sup>1</sup> K. Marx and F. Engels, *Ireland and the Irish Question*, Moscow, 1971, p. 163.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 160.

social revolution can come only in the form of an epoch in which are combined civil war by the proletariat against the bourgeoisie in the advanced countries and a *whole series* of democratic and revolutionary movements, including the national-liberation movements in the undeveloped, backward and oppressed nations."<sup>1</sup>

The 1969 Meeting paid tribute to Lenin's contribution and noted that the theory and practice of Leninism had greatly helped the cause of the successful struggle of peoples in the colonies and dependencies against imperialism and for national liberation: "Lenin unflinchingly fought imperialism and reaction, he upheld unity in action of all sections of the working people in battle against the common class enemy; he was a thorough-going internationalist, he championed equality, peace and friendship among nations, he wrathfully denounced any manifestation of racialism and chauvinism; he was the friend of all oppressed nations and opened the way to victory in the struggle against colonialism, for the people's independence and freedom, for their right to determine their own destiny."<sup>2</sup>

The Russian Revolution of October 1917 dealt a crushing blow to the whole imperialist colonial system, weakened it economically and politically, gave a powerful impulse to the national liberation struggle and involved the colonial peoples in the mainstream of the world revolutionary movement. It was a turning point in the national liberation movement throughout the world. It proved the real possibility of the complete national liberation of peoples and paved the way for the deep-going crisis of the colonial system which was to become an integral part of the general crisis of capitalism. The appearance of socialism signified the beginning of an era of liberation of the oppressed peoples.

The international significance of resolution of the national question in the USSR, which celebrated its "golden jubilee" in 1972, is testified to by the rapid economic progress, the unprecedented blossoming of creative talents,

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 23, p. 60.

<sup>2</sup> *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties*, Moscow 1969, p. 40.



the strengthening of friendship and the greatly increased welfare of the more than 100 nations and nationalities in the Soviet Union under socialism. As was mentioned in the Appeal "To the Peoples of the World", "the wonderful dream of the multinational state of a new, socialist type—a mighty voluntary union of free peoples linked by friendship and brotherhood—has come true."<sup>1</sup>

As the general crisis of capitalism steadily grew after 1917, so, too, did the role of the national liberation movement in the world revolutionary process. The Soviet victory in World War II, the formation of the world socialist system and the revolutionary movement of the international working class all created favourable conditions for the further development of the national liberation struggle of the colonies and dependencies. A fresh powerful blow was dealt to imperialism and the colonial system began to disintegrate. During the war and in the first post-war decade, more than a dozen countries won their national independence, including such vast states as China and India. Virtually all the nations of Africa have put an end to colonial dependence. In several countries, the struggle for national freedom has grown into a struggle for social emancipation and socialism (the People's Republic of China, the Korean People's Democratic Republic and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam).

By the latter half of the 1950's, the world socialist system and the Soviet Union had tilted the world balance of power towards socialism. The world socialist system was becoming the decisive factor of world social development and this made it much easier for the oppressed peoples to obtain their independence. A new, extremely favourable international situation had developed for furthering national liberation revolutions. The colonial system of oppression crumbled under the blows of these new anti-imperialist revolutions. Instead of a colonial world, there now appeared more than 70 independent national states.

The downfall of colonialism was prepared both by the internal social, economic and political development of the oppressed countries and by the success of world socialism

<sup>1</sup> *Pravda*, December 24, 1972.

and the international labour movement. The downfall of colonialism was second only in importance to the formation of the world socialist system as an event of world and historic significance.

In a historically brief span of time, largely during the 1960's, countries with an aggregate population of more than 1,500 million people were freed from direct colonial dependence. While colonies, semi-colonies and dependent states accounted for 72 per cent of the territory of the earth and over 69 per cent of the world population in 1919, by 1938 the percentages were 59.9 and 63.6 respectively, and, by the end of the 1960's, colonial territory had fallen to 4 per cent and the population to 1 per cent.

A characteristic feature of the national liberation movement today is the steady increase in its effectiveness: between 1917 and 1942, only a few countries obtained their political independence; between 1943 and 1959, 20 did so, and the number increased to about 50 in the decade from 1960 to 1970.

While at the beginning of the general crisis of capitalism, the national liberation revolutions shook the foundations of colonialism largely in Asia, the movement today has become world-wide. In the 1960's, imperialism was deprived of the bulk of its colonies in Africa. The flame of anti-imperialist revolutions has flared up on the America continent.

The social, economic and political colouring of countries that have achieved independence is very diverse.

Many liberated states are moving along the road of progress; these are the countries of a socialist orientation whose number is growing. They are gradually restricting and eliminating exploiting elements in town and country, raising the standard of living of the population, overcoming technological and economic backwardness and promoting friendly political and broad economic ties with the socialist states. As a rule, revolutionary democrats head the revolutions in these countries.

In the majority of countries in the Third World, however, capitalist relations of production still prevail. Many of them retain a low level of productive forces and have a diverse array of social and economic orders. A group of



countries in Asia, the Middle East and Latin America may be classified as medium-developed capitalist states. What is new in their development is the emergence, especially since the war, of a local monopoly bourgeoisie—as, for example, in India, Turkey, Argentina, Brazil and Mexico. What they have in common with highly developed capitalist states is the domination of capitalist relations of production and the development of monopoly and state-monopoly tendencies. Like the economically weak countries they are plagued with the presence of considerable feudal and semi-feudal vestiges and a considerable dependence on world imperialism. The revolutionary movement there, as the experience of Cuba, in particular, shows, during the initial stages is an anti-monopoly, anti-imperialist, agrarian revolution, which subsequently realises the tendency of growing over into a socialist revolution.

There are countries with a yet ill-defined course of social development, especially in Tropical Africa. As a rule, these are countries with an extremely low level of productive forces, underdeveloped social, economic, commercial and currency relations and a predominantly natural economy. Progressives there are fighting for a non-capitalist path of development that would ensure a relatively swift economic upsurge and higher standards of living all round.

Specific tasks confront the peoples that remain in colonial bondage; they are conducting a heroic, and largely armed, struggle for their liberation.

The struggle of the two opposing social systems—socialism and capitalism—which has become the pivot of all international politics and determines the course of contemporary world development, has a direct effect on the fates of the peoples of the liberated states. Socialism is the most important factor in social and national liberation. Since 1917, there has not been a revolutionary or popular movement for national and social liberation which has not received substantial assistance from the CPSU and from the Soviet Union. The forces of world socialism have decisively helped the struggle of the colonies and dependencies for liberation from imperialist tyranny. World socialism helps them also in the fight to reinforce their independence,

The Soviet Union and other socialist states and the communist parties have launched a struggle for the complete and final elimination of the remnants of colonialism and racialism and are helping the liberated peoples to obtain economic autonomy and to do away with their age-old backwardness. It was on Soviet initiative that the United Nations adopted in 1960 the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples which had proclaimed the need immediately and unconditionally to put an end to colonialism in all its forms and manifestations. The Soviet Union is giving effective military and economic aid and moral and political support to the people of Vietnam, all-round assistance to the Arab states and the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America fighting against imperialism.

The world socialist system acts as a guarantor of the national independence of young sovereign states, as a reliable shield of independent national development for the liberated peoples. In taking upon themselves the main burden of struggle against imperialism and restricting imperialism's potential to export counter-revolution, the socialist states are facilitating the conditions of struggle for peoples in the colonies and dependencies.

The socialist states are having an impact on the world revolutionary process and on the liberation struggle by force of example, by their social and economic policies and by their successes in competition with capitalism. They are aiding some 50 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America in their economic and cultural renaissance and development. Back in 1955, the Soviet Union had agreements on economic and technical co-operation only with India and Afghanistan; in 1970, however, it had such agreements with 18 countries in Asia, 20 in Africa and two in Latin America.<sup>1</sup>

The USSR and other socialist states have built or are building some 2,500 economic projects in India, Egypt, Afghanistan and elsewhere. Almost 90 per cent of Soviet aid goes on the development of branches of industry, transport and communications, on carrying out geological pros-

<sup>1</sup> See *Narodny Azii i Afriki* No. 5, 1971, p. 8.



pecting, i.e., largely on the industrialisation of the liberated states. The basis of heavy industry has been laid in many of them thanks to just such assistance. Many thousands of Soviet experts have been working in liberated states; during the building and commissioning of new enterprises, they have trained over 200,000 local workers and technicians. In 1957, Soviet universities had only 134 Afro-Asian and Latin American students, while in 1970 they had some 13,500 students from these countries.

Relations between the socialist and the liberated states are based on complete equality, mutual advantage, respect for national sovereignty and non-interference in each other's internal affairs. The aid of socialist countries is directed to the key branches of the national economy of the liberated countries and primarily helps to improve the state sector. This aid strengthens the positions of the progressive forces in their fight against imperialism.

The 24th CPSU Congress emphasised the need to deepen and extend contacts and co-operation with the young independent states, particularly with those of a socialist orientation.<sup>1</sup> Broad and comprehensive support for the national liberation movement from the forces of world socialism helps the further successful development of the anti-imperialist movements and lends the national liberation revolutions a deeper social character than at any previous time. The 1969 International Meeting noted that the "Soviet Union and the socialist world system are a beacon illuminating the path of every liberation movement".<sup>2</sup> "The existence and development of the socialist system and the assistance it is rendering to anti-capitalist and anti-colonialist actions make possible revolutionary successes everywhere in the world. The many revolutionary victories and successes in America, Africa, the Middle East, Asia and elsewhere are eloquent proof of this."<sup>3</sup> As Lenin foresaw, the peoples who have experienced the burden of colonial oppression "are becoming more and more aware of the economic neces-

<sup>1</sup> See *24th Congress of the CPSU*, p. 215.

<sup>2</sup> *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow 1969*, p. 336.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 652.

sity of an alliance with Soviet Russia against international imperialism."<sup>1</sup>

The objective demands of social progress and the example of the socialist states confront the peoples of the liberated states with prospects for a movement to socialist forms of social development. From their own experience, the peoples are being convinced of the veracity of Marxist-Leninist philosophy and the indisputable advantages of socialism.

While the world socialist system is doing all it can to help the liberated states to strengthen their political and economic independence and to move towards national and social progress, imperialism, led by the USA, is trying to hamper their development and keep them within the orbit of imperialist oppression.

The global strategic task of imperialism in the liberated countries is to repress their struggle for genuine freedom, equality and progress, to prevent their anti-capitalist development, to prevent socialist change, to sunder their links with the socialist community and to resurrect colonialism in new forms.

Due to the new correlation of class forces in the world, the growing influence of the socialist community, the huge successes of the popular struggle against colonialism and the overall debilitation of imperialist positions, imperialism is being forced more and more to augment its methods of open coercion and aggression with compromises, temporary concessions, extensive social and political manoeuvring, reformism and social demagoguery for the purposes of maintaining and extending its control over the politically sovereign, but economically weak, countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. The peoples of the liberated states are today confronted by a neocolonialism using a more complex system of international exploitation. The USA is resorting to various forms of neocolonialism, although the American imperialists like to give the impression that they are anti-colonialists and even condemn the colonial practice of European powers.

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 477.



The imperialist powers have left a grim colonial legacy in the liberated states. Imperialism bears historical responsibility for the deprivations and sufferings of hundreds of millions of people. It bears the guilt for the fact that vast masses of people in Africa, Asia and Latin America have to live in conditions of poverty, disease, illiteracy and archaic social relations, and that whole nationalities are doomed to extinction.

The policy of colonialism and neocolonialism exacerbates the contradictions between the colonies, dependencies and liberated states, on the one hand, and the imperialist powers, on the other. It is not the "designs of communism" as the neocolonialists claim, but the growing desire to be free from imperialist "patronage" and the intensifying economic and political antagonisms both at home and abroad that are the mainspring of the liberation struggle.

The national liberation movement continues to inflict crushing blows on the political foundations of colonialism and neocolonialism.

The heroic struggle of the people of Vietnam against US aggression and neocolonialist policy was one of the principal component parts of the world-wide struggle between socialism and imperialism, between the forces of progress and reaction. The agreement to end the war and to re-establish peace in Vietnam, concluded in Paris in late January 1973, includes pledges on the part of the American administration to cease military actions against North Vietnam forthwith, to take all its forces and those of its allies out of South Vietnam and to refrain from further intervention in internal Vietnamese affairs. The end to the war in Vietnam is a victory of truly historic significance. The aggressors did not manage either to destroy one of the outposts of socialism in Asia or to strangle the national liberation movement of the peoples of Indo-China or to undermine the solidarity of the anti-imperialist and peace-loving forces. The success of the Vietnamese people convincingly shows that today the peoples who are resolutely upholding their independence, sovereignty and freedom, with widespread international backing from the progressive forces, are capable of defeating imperialist aggression. The Arab liberation movement is playing an outstanding

role in the fight against world imperialism and is influencing the entire movement against imperialism and neocolonialism in the Middle East and Africa.

The forces of national liberation expose neocolonialist manoeuvres wherever the colonial powers try to retain their supremacy by declaring the colonies "overseas departments" or "overseas provinces", by means of "integration" with the metropolitan states or by creating puppet federations, as in the case of Guadeloupe, Martinique, Puerto Rico and South Arabia. They demand that the fate of their peoples should be decided by the principle of self-determination, by obtaining autonomy or by complete independence. The struggle of the peoples of Southern Africa—one of the last bastions of colonial supremacy—not only helps the revolution on the African continent, but also weakens world imperialism as a whole. The Cuban revolution broke the chain of imperialist tyranny in Latin America and gave birth to the first socialist state in that area; this signified a historic turn in events and the opening up of a new stage of the revolutionary movement. The peoples of Latin America are giving a resounding rebuff to neocolonialist manoeuvres and are acting—sometimes through armed struggle—against pro-imperialist regimes, the export of counter-revolution and for the demilitarisation of the Latin American continent. The mounting popular struggle for vital interests, the protests of progressive people in defence of national sovereignty and the growth of national awareness are inducing some governments to undertake important measures to counter imperialism; this also explains the trend towards the establishment or extension of diplomatic and commercial relations with the socialist countries. Revolution in Latin America is conspicuous by the consolidation of the revolution in Cuba which is building the foundations of socialism, by an upsurge in the anti-imperialist struggle and by the resolute defence by several countries of their national interests against imperialism.

The political influence of imperialism has weakened over a considerable part of the world; former colonies which have escaped from the political control of imperialist powers are no longer an imperialist reserve. The formation of independent states has created the prerequisites for



carrying out far-reaching social and economic changes and liberating the countries economically from imperialism.

Political independence does not mean the automatic elimination of economic subordination to the more industrially advanced capitalist powers, as the example of Latin America shows; there, many countries that had received their political independence 150 years ago remain in the economic vise of imperialism. Lenin wrote of the connection between economic and political independence, maintaining that bourgeois ideologists were usually "talking of *national* liberation ... leaving out *economic* liberation. Yet in reality it is the latter that is the chief thing".<sup>1</sup> He based his idea on the fact that under imperialism it is possible to combine formal political autonomy with actual economic dependence.

Today, after the disintegration of colonialism, plunder of the natural riches and exploitation of the local labour force in the weaker and less developed states continue to be part of the relations within the bounds of the capitalist world economy, even though the imperialists are now forced to operate more artfully and to mask their predatory aims. The imperialists foist upon these states disadvantageous economic treaties, exploit them by means of capital exports, unequal terms of trade, manipulation of prices and rates of exchange, loans and various forms of so-called aid and pressure from international finance organisations.

Soviet economists estimate that the imperialist monopolies annually extract from the Third World between \$16,000-24,000 million, while their investments in these countries (including all kinds of loans, credit and "aid") do not exceed \$5,000-8,000 million a year, including reinvestment. According to United Nations' statistics, in the 6 years from 1961 to 1966, the losses of the Third World through unequal terms of trade amounted to \$13,400 million.

The gap between the economic levels of the developed capitalist states and most other countries in the capitalist world is growing larger. Only some 11 per cent of world

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 18, p. 398.

industrial output is today accounted for by the ex-colonies and dependencies—where almost 75 per cent of the population of the non-socialist world lives. Per capita national income in 1967 amounted to \$1,500 in the economically advanced states, while in the Third World it was only \$133, including \$89 in Africa, \$96 in Asia and \$342 in Latin America. The time-gap in economic development between the African states and the industrially advanced capitalist countries has been put by UN experts at approximately several hundred years. From a technological point of view, Latin America lags behind the USA by 50 years.

Countries of the Third World are waging a stubborn struggle to attain economic independence and to accelerate the rate of economic and social progress. The nationalisation of the property of foreign monopolies testifies that these countries are, with varying degrees of consistency and resolve, undertaking measures against foreign and local monopoly capital, implementing progressive social and economic changes and showing marked shifts in the balance of class forces. The nationalisation of the property of imperialist monopolies is being undertaken vigorously in many Afro-Asian states. In some countries, a number of economic sectors have been legally closed to foreign capital and declared the state's exclusive preserve. Steps are being taken to restrict the export of profits by foreign companies.

With the help of various international economic organisations, particularly the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the countries of the Third World are getting decisions taken aimed at a more favourable price relationship, particularly for the raw materials they market, and a review of the preferential system with account for their interests and a certain increase in financial assistance. Protectionist policy is particularly important in defending national enterprise against competition from foreign monopoly capital.

The Third World is increasingly creating economic unions for defending common interests against the imperialist powers and international monopolies (as, for example, the organisation of oil-exporting countries including Iraq, Venezuela and other states).

The internal economic difficulties and continuing depen-



dence on the imperialist powers restrict the young states in conducting an independent foreign trade policy. Many countries, therefore, even those adhering to an anti-imperialist policy, often make concessions and compromises and "co-operate" with imperialist states on such issues as the import of industrial commodities and foreign capital investment. Even here, however, considerable changes are occurring. More and more countries are beginning to make their foreign policy dependent upon the interests of an independent national economy.

The campaigns by the liberated states against the *diktat* of the international monopolies and for a revision of their subordinate position within the capitalist system of the international division of labour are encouraging a further intensification of the crisis in the world capitalist economy and of the inter-imperialist contradictions.

The revolutionary process in the liberated states is uneven. The situation is witnessing, on the one hand, an upsurge in the anti-imperialist, democratic and peasant movements, sometimes developing along the lines of armed struggle, and the revolutionary actions of the proletariat, the intellectuals and the students; on the other, there is the continual interference of imperialism, political instability, frequent state coups, attempts to curtail democratic freedoms, to establish and reinforce dictatorships. While some liberated states are strengthening the anti-imperialist struggle and have attained undisputed success in consolidating political and economic independence, others are only changing the forms of dependence on imperialism, and, in some cases, are becoming even more dependent on it. The ruling circles of some newly independent states are pursuing an inconsistent policy of half measures in the fight against imperialism and, sometimes, join together with it.

Despite the crushing defeat of colonialism throughout the world, imperialism retains major positions. Many millions of people in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Oceania still languish under the colonial yoke. A large part of the newly liberated states is still under the economic, political and ideological influence of imperialist powers. The age-old social and economic backwardness of ex-colonies and semi-colonies and their economic dependence on imperialism

enables the imperialist monopolies to cling to strong, and sometimes dominating, positions in the economies of many liberated states. Nonetheless, the forward march of the national liberation movement, developing into a revolutionary movement for social emancipation, is an irreversible process.

The downfall of colonialism signifies the triumph of Leninist ideas on the inevitable victory of national liberation revolutions. The establishment of sovereign national states and their international activity as a vigorous anti-imperialist force is an important result of the national liberation movement and a natural result of the lengthy and stubborn anti-imperialist struggle of the colonial and dependent countries, drawing vast masses of people into the world revolutionary stream. The world is now witnessing not a battle of imperialist states for colonies and spheres of influence, but a struggle of ex-colonies and semi-colonies against imperialist neocolonialism and for social emancipation; that is what is playing a vital part in relations between the imperialist and newly liberated countries. This is a manifestation of the further development of the revolutionary process in those parts of the world.

The ideologists of colonialism portray events as if the colonialists were voluntarily presenting independence to the downtrodden peoples due to the changing nature of contemporary capitalism which is alleged to gain from renouncing its colonies. But it really is not the kind intentions of the colonialists; it is the cold facts of life: the world and the colonies are changing so radically that the imperialists have been forced to surrender one position after another under the impact of the objective situation.

The elimination of the shameful colonial system has immense historic significance from the standpoint of the triumph of democracy all over the world. The world is no longer politically divided into a handful of dominant nations and a majority of dependent countries and colonies. The democratic nature of the national liberation revolutions is weakening the reactionary forces on an international scale. National liberation revolutions and movements are directed at destroying imperialism and feudalism—the main forces that personify backwardness and reaction; they



are part of the struggle of all progressive forces for national and social emancipation, peace and democracy.

The independent countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America are making an important contribution to the campaign for peace and security. Many politically independent states are taking a direct part in resolving major international problems that affect the interests of all mankind. The national liberation movement has become an effective revolutionary force. The countries which, to use Lenin's expression, had been kept by the colonialists for centuries "beyond history" have become active creators of politics rather than its handmaiden. In going beyond the bounds of an individual country or continent, the national liberation struggle has acquired a marked international character. It is directed against particular imperialist powers and imperialism as a whole, against its policy of colonialism and neocolonialism.

Lenin called the movements of oppressed nations a kind of "ferment" or "catalyst" which affected other countries. The elimination of colonial regimes, the deepening and expansion of the revolutionary movement in newly liberated states affect the internal revolutionary processes in capitalist states. The heroic struggle of the Vietnamese people led to the expansion in Japan and other Asian countries of the movement for dismantling US military bases and renunciation of treaties that bind these countries to the Pentagon; a mass movement had arisen in the United States against war and militarism.

The popular liberation struggle had received a great impetus from socialist revolutions and is now providing, in turn, a fresh impetus to the world revolutionary process. National liberation revolutions are extending the social base of world revolution, accelerating it and making it more dynamic and diverse.

In remarking upon the sharp increase in the rate of historical progress in the 20th century, Lenin wrote: "The basic reason for this tremendous acceleration of world development is that new hundreds of millions of people have been drawn into it."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 349.

A distinctive feature of the present-day national liberation revolutions is that their blows are increasingly being aimed not only at national oppression and imperialism but at capitalism as a whole. "The struggle for national liberation in many countries has in practice begun to develop into a struggle against exploitative relations, both feudal and capitalist."<sup>1</sup>

The anti-imperialist revolution in several countries has grown fairly rapidly, or is growing, into a socialist revolution. Experience has shown that the international framework of socialism extends not only through the victory of socialism in advanced capitalist states, but also through countries which had been economically backward colonies or had been greatly dependent on imperialism.

One of the main characteristics of the world revolutionary process after October 1917 was the combination of the national liberation movement with the struggle of the international working class and development of the socialist states. Lenin's words are now coming true that the national liberation movement is to become an ally of the international working class in fulfilling the historic mission of getting rid of capitalism and imperialism. As proclaimed on the occasion of the Lenin centenary, "the effective accomplishment by each detachment of revolutionaries of the task of national and social emancipation in their country is an indispensable prerequisite of the struggle for the common interests of the world socialist revolution".<sup>2</sup>

The national liberation movement, by undermining the economic and political positions of imperialism, reducing the area of its influence and diverting its forces, helps to resolve the basic contradiction of the era—that between world socialism and world capitalism. In the same direction there operate such factors (engendered by the victory of national liberation revolutions) as the refusal of most newly liberated countries to take part in the aggressive military blocs of imperialism, their actions in defence of peace and the extension of multilateral relations with the socialist states. The extent of their influence on resolving

<sup>1</sup> 24th Congress of the CPSU, p. 215.

<sup>2</sup> *On the Centenary of the Birth of V. I. Lenin*, p. 48.



the main contradiction of our epoch very much depends also on the depth of their social, economic and political changes and on their activity in the international struggle against imperialism.

While noting the huge role of the national liberation movement in the world revolutionary process, one must at the same time correctly evaluate its historical place and the degree of its influence in deciding the fate of humanity.

Those who promote the peasants of the newly liberated countries to a leading position among the national-democratic forces ascribe to the national liberation movement a dominating role in the world revolutionary process. These so-called theoreticians play upon nationalistic emotions for their own purposes and exaggerate the role of movements for national liberation. A Chinese newspaper has written that the "national-liberation revolution in Asia, Africa and Latin America is today the most important force directly assaulting imperialism."<sup>1</sup> This point of view was outlined also in the documents of the Trotskyist Fourth International which maintained that, after the war, the main centre of the revolutionary movement had moved to the colonial states. Certain revisionists take a similar position in regarding the non-aligned countries as the most democratic and active part or only real forces in world politics.

Revolutionary potential is ascribed in such concepts only to the peoples of the newly liberated states who are counterposed to the working people of the socialist states and the working class of the advanced capitalist countries. They feed on the false notion that imperialism will be defeated exclusively through the revolutionary movement in the newly liberated states. They thereby demote the part played by the socialist states, the international proletariat and other democratic forces. The growing revolutionary initiative of various national detachments in the liberation movement is cited by revisionists, such as Roger Garaudy, T. Petkoff and the Manifesto group, as a counter-balance to the world socialist system and the Soviet Union, above all. They advance slogans and "theories" which split the revolutionary

<sup>1</sup> *Jenmin jihpao*, October 22, 1963.

forces in place of the unifying principles of proletarian internationalism.

The assertions that the centre of world revolution has moved to the zone of the national liberation movement tend to cast doubt on the Marxist definition of the nature of the contemporary era and replace the main contradiction of our epoch by that between the national liberation movement and imperialism, which is sometimes interpreted as a contradiction between the "rich" and "poor" nations. This approach has nothing in common with a class or Marxist-Leninist understanding of the nature of the contemporary epoch.

The national liberation movement can help and is helping to resolve the basic contradiction of the age, but by itself it is not in a condition to resolve it. National liberation and national-democratic revolutions are certainly a thorn in the flesh of imperialism, but they cannot be regarded as a self-contained force which can alone eliminate imperialism. Despite the metropolitan states being deprived of almost all their colonies, imperialism continues to exist and cause colossal damage to the peoples of the world. The international system of exploitation and oppression, which it has created, has undergone a change and is experiencing a deep crisis, but has not vanished completely. By undermining the international positions of imperialism, the national liberation struggle by itself does not abolish the social and economic causes that have engendered it. The domination of monopoly capital of the USA, Britain, France, West Germany and Japan, which produce colonialism and neo-colonialism, can only be destroyed by the peoples of these states if they rely on the new correlation of class forces in the world, a correlation developing through the triumphant development of socialism, the labour movement and the national democratic struggle.

The fact that the socialist system is a basic factor in the world revolutionary process by no means depreciates the historic importance of the national liberation movement; on the contrary, it helps it develop to the full. The growing role of the anti-imperialist and national liberation movement in the world revolutionary process is largely due to the growth and strengthening of the socialist system and



the success of the international labour movement; its power depends on association and unity with other revolutionary streams. The anti-imperialist character of national liberation wars and revolutions, and their democratic essence bring together the forces of socialism, the international labour movement and national liberation, and combine these revolutionary streams into a single world revolutionary process.

That is why the imperialists vigorously oppose the spreading of Marxist-Leninist ideas to the newly liberated countries and do all they can to spread anti-Sovietism and anti-communism in the democratic and socialist movements of these states. Bourgeois politicians and ideologists tirelessly refer to an alleged dependence of the communist movement in the newly liberated states on the CPSU, to the dangers of international communism; they endeavour to whip up feelings of hatred for the USSR. By their use of anti-communism, the imperialists try to divide revolutionaries in the newly liberated states and isolate them from their natural allies—the socialist states and the revolutionary labour movement.

Repressions against Communists—the most consistent and resolute fighters for national and social emancipation—have occurred in several parts of the Third World and they weaken the front of the anti-imperialist forces. Imperialist and reactionary circles all over the world approve of the anti-communist hysteria which has been whipped up in some newly liberated states. Wherever there is no unity of the national liberation movement with the forces of socialism and the international labour movement, the national liberation struggle is either being repressed or restricted to the tasks of capitalist development. The exposure of anti-communism and anti-Sovietism plays an extremely important part in the successful realisation of democratic trends in the national liberation movement.

The tried and tested Leninist principles of proletarian internationalism are the ideological basis for unity of the international labour and national liberation movement. As the First Secretary of the Communist Party of Uruguay, Rodney Arismendi, said at the 1969 International Meeting of Communists: "We ... stand in need of unity because we

foresee a great collision on the international and the national levels. We consider that the unity of our movement will facilitate the coming stern struggle and, in particular, it will lighten the grim battles of the peoples of colonial, semi-colonial and dependent countries. We stand in need of unity because thanks to it the inspiring light of Marxism-Leninism will burn more brightly on the ideological, cultural and human levels."<sup>1</sup>

The unity of the national liberation movement with other revolutionary streams is being attained primarily thanks to the efforts of all communist and workers' parties in their joint struggle against imperialism, nationalism and chauvinism, anti-communism and anti-Sovietism, in the fight against attempts to counterpose some revolutionary movements to others.

## 2. Problems of Non-Capitalist Development

With the growth of the world revolutionary process, national liberation revolutions increasingly merge with the fight for socialism and serve as a powerful catalyst of deep-going social processes. Socialist revolution is the result of a relatively rapid development of the revolutionary process wherever the proletariat has formed before the national liberation revolution and where it is an organised, politically independent class force which recognises its historic mission and leads the revolutionary movement. This process develops according to laws that are common for all countries and is distinguished by a great variety of forms and methods of resolving national tasks.

In countries at the pre-bourgeois stage of development, or where capitalism is underdeveloped and where the internal conditions do not ensure the necessary requisites for a direct transition to socialism (there may be no industry or working class), there is a possibility of conditions being

<sup>1</sup> *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow 1969*, p. 202.



created that would obviate capitalism and open up a path of non-capitalist development.

The idea of non-capitalist development stems directly from the Marxist analysis of the problems of world socialist revolution. It has a long pre-history. Marx and Engels indicated socialist prospects for peoples who lagged in their development and had been plundered and doomed by imperialism to stagnation. In the works of Lenin, the idea of non-capitalist development received further theoretical substantiation. The October Revolution, by establishing proletarian dictatorship, was first to create the necessary conditions and vital need for the practical application of the theory of non-capitalist development. The historical experience of tackling the national question in the USSR and the transition to socialism of nationalities that had not passed through the capitalist stage was the first practical test and confirmation of the Marxist-Leninist approach to the nationalities issue.

Marx and Engels examined the prospects that lay before the peoples of the colonies and closely associated their fate with the historic tasks of the proletariat in the advanced states. For the first time, the idea of transition to socialism by-passing the capitalist stage of development was mentioned by Marx in analysing the national liberation movement in India. Marx and Engels later looked at this possibility in connection with the problems of revolution in Russia, in their correspondence with Russian politicians. Marx wrote: "If Russia continues to pursue the path she has followed since 1861, she will lose the finest chance ever offered by history to a people and undergo all the fatal vicissitudes of the capitalist regime."<sup>1</sup> The chance to avoid these "fatal vicissitudes" could present itself, in Marx's view, if proletarian revolution in Europe would coincide with peasant revolution in Russia.

Engels paid particular attention to the prospects for non-capitalist development and stressed the force of example of the proletarian revolution for backward, pre-capitalist societies. He wrote: "Once Europe is reorganised, and North

<sup>1</sup> K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, Moscow, 1965, p. 312.

America, that will furnish such colossal power and such an example that the semi-civilised countries will of themselves follow in their wake; economic needs, if anything, will see to that."<sup>1</sup> Marx and Engels saw in the non-capitalist path of development a real chance of the backward nations "considerably shortening their advance to socialist society".<sup>2</sup>

They emphasised the importance of the impact of a victorious proletarian revolution on the peoples in the backward states by force of example and the need for concrete assistance to these peoples by the victorious socialist states. In referring, for example, to the possibility of the Russian peasants getting to socialism and by-passing capitalism, Engels pointed out that the working class of the socialist states should provide the peasants of the backward states with "the material conditions which he needs if only to carry through the revolution necessarily connected therewith of his whole agricultural system".<sup>3</sup>

First, Lenin examined the problem of non-capitalist development in its internal "Russian" aspect, having in mind the extreme backwardness of the far-flung areas of the former tsarist empire for which the proletarian revolution and dictatorship had opened up the prospect of reaching socialism from pre-capitalist stages through a series of intermediate stages within the framework of socialist revolution. Second, he examined the problem of non-capitalist development in its international aspect, as a component of the world revolutionary process. He believed that victorious socialism, interacting with the revolutionary peoples of the backward countries, could and should support non-capitalist trends in the development of individual states and on a world-wide scale. In his report to the Second Comintern Congress, Lenin gave a negative answer to the question of whether he regarded the capitalist stage of development inevitable for the peoples of the backward countries carrying on a liberation struggle.

He pointed out that if revolutionaries conducted systematic socialist propaganda among the working people of these countries and victorious socialism gave them every

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 351.

<sup>2</sup> K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 403.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 395.



possible assistance, a situation could develop in which local revolutionary fighters, who had created parties and democratic institutions, like peasant councils and working people's Soviets expressing the popular will yet adapted to the pre-capitalist conditions and local situation, would lead the working people along the path of non-capitalist development. He said: "The Communist International should advance the proposition, with the appropriate theoretical grounding, that with the aid of the proletariat of the advanced countries, backward countries can go over to the Soviet system and, through certain stages of development, to communism, without having to pass through the capitalist stage."<sup>1</sup> Here, the concepts of "Soviet system" and institutions of the Soviet type by no means signified an absolute standard of state structure; they express only the main feature of the social organisation of countries that take the non-capitalist path—the leadership by democratically elected bodies expressing the popular will.

The basic conditions for non-capitalist development form from the active interrelationship of the external and internal factors. This possibility only arises when the socialist states are strong and have extensive and growing ties with the countries beginning non-capitalist change. The steady upsurge in the revolutionary movement of broad popular masses in these countries is pivotal for non-capitalist development and presupposes the actual subordination of state and party policy to the tasks of progressive transformation of all social spheres along socialist lines.

The historical situation for peoples that have chosen a non-capitalist path today is developing in a situation of rivalry between two sets of forces. On the one hand is the steadily mounting influence of socialism on world development; on the other, imperialism is doing all it can to retain the world capitalist economic system and keep the newly liberated countries within its sphere by stimulating the development of capitalist tendencies. As a consequence, the action of factors favouring the creation of social, economic, political and cultural conditions for a transition to socialism occurs in the process of resolving a whole set

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 244.

of contradictions: between the subordinate position of a country in the world capitalist economy and the objective need for economic independence; between the need for foreign capital and the lack of imperialist desire to provide capital in any form other than plunder; between the anti-imperialist interests of wide sections of the population including the peasants and the urban petty bourgeoisie, and the interests of foreign and local capital united on a common class basis; between the desire of the socialist states to help the working people of the newly liberated world to abolish exploitation and overcome backwardness and the absence of internal conditions for a direct transition to socialist revolution.

The first historical experience of non-capitalist development was accumulated during the socialist revolution and socialist construction in the USSR in tackling problems in the outlying regions. The October Revolution brought freedom and national liberation to peoples whom tsarism had oppressed and kept in a state of pre-capitalist and even pre-feudal backwardness. The Soviet proletariat extended huge political, economic and military assistance to the population of Soviet Central Asia, Kazakhstan, the Far North and other outlying regions, in many of which, after the revolution, independent republics arose which later joined the USSR. Non-capitalist development of these peoples presupposed, following the abolition of national oppression, the elimination of the age-long economic inequality and cultural backwardness. In a resolution passed at the 10th Congress of the Russian Communist Party it was stated: "The proletarian revolution was bound to come up against all this at its eastern peripheries and its prime task is consistently to abolish all the remnants of national inequality in all areas of social and economic life and, above all, to develop industry in a planned way in the border territories."<sup>1</sup>

The social, economic, political and cultural attainments of the Soviet peoples in Central Asia, Kazakhstan, the Far North and the Far East are sufficiently well known to need

<sup>1</sup> KPSS v rezolyutsiyakh i resheniyakh s'yezdov, konferentsiy i plenumov TsK, Vol. 2, p. 253 (in Russian).



but little comment here. The high level of industrial development, the complete elimination of illiteracy and the involvement of very wide sections of the population in active political life are all vivid proof of the advantages for the working people of non-capitalist development, implemented under the leadership of the Soviet Communist Party and with the full and final triumph of socialist relations.

Another practical confirmation of non-capitalist development in the new political situation outside the state framework of a large socialist power was the preparation for the building of socialism in Mongolia, which had successfully negotiated the transition from a popular to a socialist revolution in circumstances where the USSR was still surrounded by capitalists.

The First Secretary of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party and Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Yumzhagiin Tsedenbal, paid tribute to the immense contribution of Lenin in elaborating the problems of non-capitalist development and the historic significance of the October Revolution for the fates of previously backward peoples; in April 1970 he wrote: "It was precisely Leninism and the Great October Socialist Revolution that set free the Mongolian people from poverty and ignorance, lawlessness and slavery, from the vice of need, deprivation and backwardness to which we had been doomed by feudalism and colonialism."<sup>1</sup> The victory of the Mongolian people's revolution, whose moving force was the poor peasantry, became possible only by virtue of the international revolutionary alliance with the Soviet working class. Tsedenbal had said earlier: "It was the establishment of the close alliance between the Mongolian revolution and the first proletarian revolution and the homeland of the Russian Revolution—the great Soviet Union—which ensured the historic attainments which the working people of our country have had over the 50 years' existence of our free land."<sup>2</sup> The comprehensive political, economic, cultural, military, diplomatic and other assistance by the Soviet Union has been a decisive guarantee of the historic attain-

<sup>1</sup> *Pravda*, April 20, 1970.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, April 3, 1971.

ments of the Mongolian people along with their valiant labour and sound Party leadership.

The victory of popular revolution and the building of socialism in Mongolia represent the triumph of Marxism-Leninism in general and the triumph of Lenin's forecast of the possible transition of backward states from pre-capitalism, through a series of intermediate stages, to socialism, bypassing capitalism. The conversion of socialism into a world system and the powerful upsurge of the anti-imperialist and national liberation movements have given the idea of non-capitalist development even greater attraction. Socialism has become the banner of liberation movements against colonialism and neocolonialism, for independence and social progress. The programmes of non-capitalist development have become increasingly popular over the most diverse areas of the world. Nowadays, socialism is recognised as the official doctrine of governments and political parties in many Afro-Asian states. The new phase in which the national democratic movement in Afro-Asian states entered at the end of the 1960's is connected with the clear-cut appearance and growth of a rift between the progressive revolutionary and democratic forces in these countries and the reactionary, anti-democratic forces. As mentioned at the 24th Congress of the CPSU, the fight against reaction is in progress everywhere and "in some countries the progressive forces have already scored serious gains".<sup>1</sup>

The fight against all kinds of exploitation and, in particular, anti-capitalist trends are developing everywhere in the newly liberated countries, take various forms and are at various stages of political maturity. They comprise in their sum total a vigorous potential for world socialist revolution. These trends are apparent in the spreading ideological views that have an anti-capitalist, anti-dictatorial and general democratic bias with the prospect of their evolution to scientific socialism. Anti-capitalist trends are manifest in the development of democratic institutions which help the wider involvement of the working people in government. Movements directed against nationalistic and separatist centrifugal forces are now acquiring increasingly progressive

<sup>1</sup> 24th Congress of the CPSU, p. 24.



importance. In the sphere of economic relations, non-capitalist trends find expression in measures for preparing and affirming social forms of ownership. In foreign policy, the manifestation of a non-capitalist policy is noticeable in the development of broad contacts with the socialist states and concerted anti-imperialist actions.

Where such trends grow to the scale of state policy, whose proclamation is accompanied by real actions in all major directions, one can safely say that these countries are taking the path of non-capitalist development. The consistent and phased implementation of the major principles of non-capitalist development may, in a relatively brief historical term, convert a backward dependent country into a modern state of a socialist type. This has been shown by the historical experience of Mongolia, North Vietnam and several other countries which began to build socialism amid widespread pre-capitalist forms and social structures.

More and more countries are now choosing the non-capitalist path. The 24th CPSU Congress noted that they have become "the advanced contingent of the present-day national liberation movement".<sup>1</sup> Their numbers are constantly growing. Similarly, the intensity of development of non-capitalist trends in various areas of the Third World is constantly increasing. This last factor depends, on the one hand, on the maturity and organisation of socialist and revolutionary democratic movements in the newly liberated countries and on the real possibilities of the socialist states to offer support to these movements. On the other hand, non-capitalist trends are constantly being blocked and meeting a frankly hostile reaction from imperialism and the anti-democratic forces on a local and international scale. The fight to take the newly liberated states out of the world capitalist system has only just begun. Sacrifices and losses are inevitable but victory ultimately is assured.

The ideological opponents of socialism identify the objective difficulties of development along a non-capitalist path and the subjective mistakes made by some leaders with the essence of the very concept of non-capitalist development. In this way, they try to prove its apparent lack of

<sup>1</sup> 24th Congress of the CPSU, p. 215.

vitality. Any revolutionary movement, especially in backward agrarian countries, inevitably bears the burden of historical legacy and temporary setbacks. But the overall course of events is determined by the objective requirements of the development of the productive forces in the newly liberated states, by the growth of the ideological influence and material possibilities of the socialist states, by the accelerated development of class consciousness among the working people in the newly liberated states and imperialism's steady loss of positions in the ex-colonies.

Africa today has the largest variety of attempts at non-capitalist development; capitalism had there manifested itself in its worst and most inhuman form—through its system of colonial enslavement and oppression. Many African territories are populated by people who have not experienced the developed capitalist or even feudal relations. The fight against colonial oppression very much coincides there with the overall protest against the capitalist system, and it is encouraging militant peoples to take the non-capitalist path. A further development of the national liberation and national democratic revolutions may weaken and then completely eliminate the influence of capitalist trends in a whole number of African states.

The countries of a non-capitalist orientation differ from those where capitalism is developing by their progressive policy which meets the interests of the working people: an anti-imperialist foreign policy, encouragement of collective forms of ownership of the means of production at the expense of large-scale and medium private property, the development of democratic institutions and parties, the campaign against illiteracy and the extension of ties with the socialist states.

Non-capitalist development, despite its great diversity, presupposes the compulsory resolution of several basic problems that are common for all countries that take this road. In the final analysis, the period of non-capitalist development, no matter how protracted and uneven it might be, is organically connected with the mounting role of a revolutionary party equipped with Marxist-Leninist theory and applying this theory to practice; it is connected with the growth of the political, cultural and economic activity of the working people, primarily the working class and the peasants.



The country can gradually overcome disproportions and its economy can adapt itself to a more rational use of natural and manpower resources, more fully realise the possibilities it has for increasing labour productivity, the national product and people's welfare in this period through internal efforts and use of assistance from the socialist countries. Despite all the contradictions and complexity of the non-capitalist tendency, it reflects the most progressive historical changes and the real prospects of genuine independence that open up for the peoples of the newly liberated states. Only the non-capitalist road is capable of saving the peoples of these countries from a long and burdensome capitalist development which is aggravated by their subordinate status of backward countries within the world capitalist system. The CPSU Programme states that "the non-capitalist road of development is ensured by the struggle of the working class and the masses of the people, by the general democratic movement, and meets the interests of the absolute majority of the nation".<sup>1</sup>

Lenin developed the idea of non-capitalist development and applied it to the backward areas of Russia; he stressed the inevitability of intermediate stages in this lengthy transitional period. In his article "The Tax in Kind" he wrote that "successfully to solve the problem of our immediate transition to socialism, we must understand what *intermediary* paths, methods, means and instruments are required for the transition from *pre-capitalist relations to socialism*".<sup>2</sup> These stages in countries that have chosen the non-capitalist path are associated with the development of productive forces and the social evolution of a society in which the peasants and petty bourgeoisie first predominate; then there is an accelerated formation of the working class simultaneously with the accession of the peasants to co-operative forms of ownership.

Ultimately, during socialist change, the working class becomes the decisive force of society which, in alliance with the poor peasants and progressive intellectuals, overcomes the resistance of exploiting elements and guarantees the

<sup>1</sup> *The Road to Communism*, Moscow, 1961, p. 495.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 349.

development of socialist construction. National technical personnel and skilled workers are trained in a liberated state, which uses the influence and assistance of the world socialist system for its state and mixed enterprises. These skilled workers also appear at the factories owned by foreign or local capitalists, who are restricted by state regulations and the active influence of the workers themselves.

In most African states, the proletariat is still small, especially in industry, and is only just beginning to organise itself. It is an important task, in creating the conditions for socialist revolution, to strengthen the part played by the working class even at the very earliest stages of industrialisation. The main characteristic of the transfer of the leading role to the proletariat in the circumstances of non-capitalist development is that this revolutionary process is gradual and takes a long time by contrast with the situation in the advanced capitalist states. Here is an obvious difference in the conditions and, consequently, the modes of establishing proletarian dictatorship in advanced capitalist and newly liberated states; here lies the danger of the newly liberated states being diverted from the non-capitalist path to capitalism. The considered policy of a gradual but undeviating extension of political rights and leading role of the workers in social affairs constitutes the principal guarantee of success, the basis of alliances with other democratic forces; it determines the process of non-capitalist development not as evolution but as a *revolutionary process protracted in time*.

The use of the expression "socialist revolution" by many revolutionary democrats certainly does not mean that their notions of it fully coincide with that of Marxism-Leninism. In their substance, revolutionary measures carried out in countries with a socialist orientation today have basically an anti-imperialist, anti-feudal and general democratic character. But, even today, they are carrying out such important anti-capitalist changes as restricting and doing away with the property of the local bourgeoisie.

The National Action Charter of the Arab Republic of Egypt advances the demand for all the main means of production to be transferred to the people, for the workers and peasants to have half the seats in all elected bodies, for the union of feudal and capitalist elements to be destroyed and



for the equality of all citizens to be guaranteed. Private capital, the Charter states, can operate only under state control. The ruling Arab Socialist Union Party proposes implementing a programme of further extension of the rights of the working people, especially the industrial workers, so as to give real political substance to the proclaimed policy of aiming for socialism.

The Tripoli Programme of the Algerian National Liberation Front has also proclaimed a policy of creating a society on socialist principles, satisfying the material needs of the people, nationalising the principal means of production and creating all the necessary political, social, technical and cultural conditions for national progress.

The creation of a democratic and socialist state, the development of a planned economy, the strengthening of national unity, the formation of new class and mass organisations, the implementation of an independent foreign policy and the strengthening of the leading role of the Party were all regarded as prime tasks at the First Congress of the Burmese Socialist Programme Party in 1971.

The proclaiming of similar programmes by national democrats is being accompanied by the carrying out of important anti-imperialist, democratic and anti-capitalist reforms.

The progressive changes of a non-capitalist type are typically beginning with the superstructure. The guarantees of their successful revolutionary development are likewise connected with the political superstructure. The gap between political institutions, ideology and the social and economic basis at the start of the non-capitalist road is quite great. They are gradually coming closer together, but it is an extremely complex and contradictory process.

*The question of power* is the main political issue of non-capitalist development. Lenin indicated in a discussion with a delegation of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party the possibility of and the need for Mongolia to undertake non-capitalist development; he drew attention to the "hard work on the part of the People's Revolutionary Party and the Government, so that this work and the increased influence of the Party and the authorities would result in a growth of the number of co-operatives, in the introduc-

tion of new forms of economic activity and national culture".<sup>1</sup>

State power in countries that have begun non-capitalist development is essentially the revolutionary democratic dictatorship by the working people. The progressive intellectuals play a relatively large part here, greater than in the advanced capitalist states, especially in the initial period. Above all, they produce many revolutionary democrats whose ideas can develop, and often do develop, in the direction of scientific socialism. Their activity, initially subordinated to resolving purely national tasks, serves to create the real conditions for socialism. As the alignment of forces develops within the revolutionary democratic front, it changes in favour of the working class, which increases numerically and strengthens continually its political and economic positions and unites around it all the working sections of the people.

A democratic solution to the national problems is a vital issue of non-capitalist development. When the colonies achieve their political independence, they alter their international legal status, but they do not resolve many national and ethnic issues. The non-capitalist path makes it possible to resolve the nationalities issue in a democratic way. Lenin, in advocating the union of the proletariat and the working people of all nations, noted that "this union alone will guarantee victory over capitalism, without which the abolition of national oppression and inequality is impossible".<sup>2</sup>

Capitalism is demonstrating its complete inability to overcome the backwardness of the newly liberated peoples. The parasitical nature of the bourgeoisie in the young states, its inclination to invest its capital in non-productive spheres, in areas other than those that would ensure the country's economic development, forces progressive national leaders to seek fresh methods of tackling social and economic problems.

Non-capitalist development presupposes in the economic sphere, on the one hand, accelerated development of the productive forces and, on the other, the establishment of state

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, p. 361.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 31, p. 146.



and co-operative forms of property, which gradually become predominant in key areas of the national economy. The only way to overcome backwardness is through rapid industrialisation taking account of and exploiting the latest scientific and technological attainments. The discussions going on in all the newly liberated countries on how industrialisation may be carried out testify, in particular, to the great differences in their starting levels, in their position in world markets and the aims of the embattled social forces. One thing is clear: the non-capitalist path of development certainly does not presuppose the creation within a country, immediately and at any cost, of heavy industry and a developed economic complex that would ensure economic independence. One of the obvious advantages of non-capitalist development is precisely the fact that the world socialist market and the advantageous economic ties with socialist states enable the developing countries to ensure a progressive development of an independent economy in a manner least painful for the working people.

The 24th CPSU Congress noted a new phenomenon in world development connected with the further expansion of firmly based mutually advantageous economic relations between the USSR and many developing states in Asia, Africa and Latin America: "Our co-operation with them, based on principles of equality and respect for mutual interests, is acquiring the nature of a stable division of labour, as opposed in the sphere of international economic relations to the system of imperialist exploitation."<sup>1</sup>

The main factor in economic non-capitalist development is gradually to establish collective forms of property which, on the one hand, accumulate the means necessary for economic growth and, on the other, stimulate material and moral interest of all members of society in a rapid extended reproduction.

The lack of ability and desire by private capital to resolve problems of industrialisation and rapid agricultural development in the interests of the whole of society advances the state sector to a leading place in the economy. The central role of this sector, which is used not for encouraging and

<sup>1</sup> 24th Congress of the CPSU, p. 200.

supporting private capital but for establishing optimum economic proportions, distinguishes the countries of a socialist orientation from other newly liberated states. The state sector constitutes essentially the economic basis of revolutionary democratic government. In Egypt, it accounts for 85 per cent of industrial output today; in Burma it controls over 80 per cent of the extractive and some 60 per cent of the manufacturing industries. Many foreign firms, banks and commercial firms have been taken over by the state in Algeria, Guinea and Tanzania. Nationalisation of foreign and national private capital is, along with the abolition of the property of the colonial administration, a key element in the formation of the state sector in the socialist-oriented states.

Algeria, for example, nationalised a large number of "abandoned" properties left by the colonialists; they included land holdings, private firms, buildings and shops. Then nationalisation spread to factories in light industry and transport that had belonged to the local bourgeoisie. Although private capital in Algeria is far from being abolished, new forms of social and economic significance are developing under state leadership, such as autonomous enterprises that combine the interests of individual groups of workers with those of the state.

Nationalisation in Egypt has played no less important a role. It was accelerated by the combined British, French and Israeli aggression in 1956, which affected a key position in the country's economy—the Suez Canal. The expulsion of the large-scale national bourgeoisie began in 1960 with the nationalisation of the National Bank of Egypt and the commercial Bank Misr, private banks, insurance companies and some large and medium industrial firms. The state also established control over the cotton trade.

The action of the Supreme Revolutionary Council of the Democratic Republic of Somalia to nationalise foreign banks, establish control over the Somali Electricity Company and an agrarian-industrial company and plans to create other national enterprises and institutions all testify to the government's intention to shore up the state sector in the economy.

In many states of non-capitalist development, the small producers of town and country make up the overwhelming



majority of the population and, at the same time, are the section of the population which is determining the country's political orientation. For that reason, Lenin stressed the particular importance of first resolving the peasant issue in these backward states. Agrarian reform is one of the vital problems of social life and of the economy of virtually all the Afro-Asian states. The successful tackling of the food problem, whose acuteness is illustrated by the fact that millions of people on these two continents are today dying of chronic starvation and undernourishment, depends on the state of agriculture. Agricultural development is tied up with expanding the internal market and accumulating capital, developing the manufacturing industry and receiving foreign currency. The basic social tasks of non-capitalist development in the countryside are to stop small peasant farmers from going bankrupt, evoking in them a desire for economic self-organisation in various forms of co-operatives and establishing control over the development of private capitalism. At the same time, measures connected with the agrarian technological revolution are extremely important; they include the cultivation of new land and the construction of irrigation schemes, the introduction of new farming technology, the organisation of equipment-hiring stations and centralised seed-growing, the supply of fertiliser to the peasants, etc.

The difficult set of problems associated with tackling the agrarian issue in the socialist-oriented countries does not enable them to limit themselves in their programmes only to a just redistribution of land in favour of the peasants. In order to move to a large-scale, economically profitable agriculture, they have to consider the prospect of a gradual co-operation of the countryside on a non-capitalist basis. A Leninist path of stage-by-stage co-operation of small peasants during the agrarian revolution is the long-term aim which today confronts the progressive forces in many newly liberated countries.

In African states that had taken the non-capitalist path of development, the agrarian reforms were initially directed against the European colonialists and the large landowners who were, in the early period, only restricted.

Agricultural co-operation in the socialist-oriented states is an extremely diverse process. Small-commodity produc-

tion is normally encouraged during the co-operation of primitive, pre-capitalist economies, because it teaches the members of the former communities to conduct their farming in an organised way, it stimulates personal interest and the search for profitable and rational methods of cultivation and husbandry. Subsequently, however, as a result of the centralised economic policy, the small-commodity producers find themselves in less favourable conditions by comparison with the public and collective enterprises which are destined in future to determine the face of socialist society. The problem of managing the processes of developing a small-commodity market production which has the tendency to a spontaneous growth of capitalist elements is a central social and economic problem that has to be overcome in non-capitalist development.

If the road of non-capitalist development is strictly adhered to, the gradual creation of prerequisites and elements of socialist society will be predominantly peaceful. Social reforms and changes bear a revolutionary character to the extent that they are directed at preparing the way for socialism. This, naturally, does not preclude situations in which defence of progressive gains in the socialist-oriented states may demand the use of military force. Difficulties that have arisen and sometimes retrogressive steps in various countries with progressive regimes caused by imperialist intrigues and internal reaction have demonstrated the immense importance of defending progress and the need for immense ideological work within the armies of these states. Being a relatively independent social institution, the army can be used by pro-capitalist and pro-imperialist elements to turn events towards capitalist development. For the purposes of exporting counter-revolution, the world bourgeoisie uses officers, many of whom had received their basic training (and were subject to brainwashing) in the capitalist states.

The difficulties and problems that arise during non-capitalist development have both an objective and a subjective character. The absence of resources, immaturity of the economy, low cultural level of the population and dependence on the world capitalist market are all phenomena that have formed as a result of colonial domination.



Subjective factors, too, have to be reckoned with: the lack of experience, external and internal sabotage by reactionary forces, manifestations of bureaucracy and corruption, the influence of divisive policies by Right- and "Left"-wing revisionists within the world communist and labour movement.

The non-capitalist path of development in the present situation of the rivalry between the two world social systems, in the circumstances of the refined expansion of neo-colonialism in the newly liberated states does not mean that the population of the numerous ex-colonies, which makes just demands on "their" metropolitan countries, will arrive at socialism exclusively through the influence of the efforts of the socialist states. The non-capitalist path is an opportunity which opens up only with the victory of socialism, an opportunity for the rapid development of one's own national economy and culture, that is less painful for the working people of the backward countries and more favourable for ensuring their improved welfare, genuine democracy and a just social system. It is precisely because these parties and peoples, despite the inevitable difficulties, are endeavouring to realise these opportunities that the Communists of all countries try to give them maximum assistance.

Muhammed Jaber Bajbuj, member of the Baath Party of Syria, said at the 24th CPSU Congress: "The Soviet Union, by giving our Arab country—Syria—help in creating the material and economic basis of a new society, is helping us to go forward along the path of socialist change within the country and also confidently to withstand aggression from without."<sup>1</sup> The USSR has helped the Syrians to start oil extraction; with Soviet aid, a great dam is being built on the Euphrates which is to play a great part in speeding up economic development and improving the living standards of the Syrian people.

The Treaty on Friendship and Co-operation between the Soviet Union and Egypt, signed in 1971, was an important stage in strengthening friendly relations. This historic document is aimed at supporting the just national liberation struggle of the Egyptian people in their firm resolve to

<sup>1</sup> 24th Congress of the CPSU, p. 95.

eliminate the consequences of Israeli aggression and to establish a just peace in the Middle East. The signing of this treaty was the crowning of several years of equal and honourable relations between the Soviet and Egyptian peoples, fighting against imperialism and in support of the national liberation movements throughout the world.

The extension of economic ties with the socialist states—the building of industrial enterprises, mutually advantageous trade, technical assistance and credit, training of national personnel—all help to accelerate the development of productive forces and strengthen the political autonomy and attain economic independence of many newly liberated peoples.

Lenin described the social type of national liberation movement of backward peoples back in 1920 when he wrote: "It is beyond doubt that any national movement can only be a bourgeois-democratic movement, since the overwhelming mass of the population in the backward countries consist of peasants who represent bourgeois-capitalist relationships."<sup>1</sup> Even then, however, Lenin demanded a precise distinction between the bourgeois-reformist and revolutionary movements. In advancing the task of support for the peasant movement in the backward countries and organising the fight for new forms of popular power, he said that "we, as Communists, should and will support bourgeois liberation movements in the colonies only when they are genuinely revolutionary, and when their exponents do not hinder our work of educating and organising in a revolutionary spirit the peasantry and the masses of the exploited".<sup>2</sup>

Non-capitalist development is taking place in a situation of acute ideological, political, economic and, sometimes, armed struggle. Its external and internal opponents try to exploit any objective difficulties and subjective mistakes of the young independent states so as to blame all the hardships and problems, all the inevitable consequences of the burdensome legacy of the colonial era, precisely on the non-capitalist character of the changes being implemented.

As mentioned at the 1969 Meeting, imperialism "supports

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 241.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 242.



reactionary circles, retards the abolition of the most backward social structures and tries to obstruct progress along the road to socialism or along the road of progressive non-capitalist development, which can open the way to socialism".<sup>1</sup> The imperialists widely exploit the dependent position of the young national states on the world capitalist market. The long list of methods they use to make things difficult for the socialist-oriented states includes economic boycott, price cuts on raw materials and agricultural produce and disadvantageous credit terms. The "free" capitalist world sends to these countries spies and trouble-makers and plots attempts on the lives of progressive leaders. All the means of misinformation and bourgeois propaganda are used to discredit the ideas of socialism and to misrepresent progressive policies. The proponents of anti-communism try to prevent developing close contacts between the young countries and the socialist world and the establishment of concerted action by these countries, which is necessary for a more rapid resolution of the urgent tasks in the economy and politics.

In an address to the Second All-Russia Congress of Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East, Lenin spoke of the peculiar forms of the alliance between advanced proletarians throughout the world and working people who sometimes lived in medieval conditions. He noted the vast international importance of the experience of non-capitalist development of some peoples in Soviet Russia. He said: "We have accomplished on a small scale in our country what you will do on a big scale and in big countries."<sup>2</sup> The time has come when this idea has begun to be implemented on an international scale.

An increasing number of countries liberated from national oppression were attempting far-reaching changes in all social spheres and proclaiming socialism as their goal. L. I. Brezhnev has said: "This is, of course, not easy for the young states, whose development had been held up for centuries by the colonialists. For this it is necessary to raise the pro-

<sup>1</sup> *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow 1969*, p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 161.

ductive forces to the level required by socialism, establish totally new relations of production, change the psychology of the people and set up a new administrative apparatus relying on the support of the masses."<sup>1</sup>

The non-capitalist path of development requires from the workers, peasants and every working man in the newly liberated states a high level of revolutionary enthusiasm, persistent hard work, the maintenance and strengthening of unity of the progressive and democratic forces and the utilisation of support from their sincere friends all over the world.

<sup>1</sup> L. I. Brezhnev, *Following Lenin's Course*, p. 301.



## WAR, PEACE AND REVOLUTION

## 1. Peace and World Revolution

The problems of peace in our epoch are indissolubly connected with the world revolutionary process and have become one of the most burning issues of the day. Success and prospects for revolution depend not only on the internal political situation in a country, but on the international climate. Each step in building a new life in the socialist states and each new step by the international liberation movement is not made today without the most decisive struggle against the imperialist policy of aggression and for the creation of conditions beneficial to world revolution.

Extension of the sphere of action of revolutionary forces and their heightened activity are provoking mounting resistance from imperialist reaction, which does not stop short at aggression or whipping up local wars for the purposes of crushing a liberation movement. At the same time, the imperialists look upon local wars as a testing ground for their future adventurist plans. The struggle against local wars fanned by the imperialists is therefore just as much connected with opposition to a global war which they are preparing as the successes of the international anti-war movement are with the progress of world revolution. The struggle against the threat of local wars being launched by the imperialists helps to extend the anti-imperialist front. It is closely intertwined with the rivalry between the forces of socialism and imperialism and with the class action of the proletariat in capitalist states and with the national liberation movement.

Marx and Engels looked upon the problems of peace in association with other issues facing the international proletarian movement. In the Inaugural Address of the Working Men's International Association (the First International), they proclaimed the peace campaign as "part of the general struggle for the emancipation of the working classes".<sup>1</sup>

With the start of the imperialist era, peace problems faced the international working class with even greater acuteness. The world was shaken by unceasing predatory wars unleashed by monopoly capital against the vital interests of the working people. At the same time, they also shook imperialism to its foundations. "The appalling misery of the masses, which has been created by the war, cannot fail to evoke revolutionary sentiments and movements" directed against their perpetrators.<sup>2</sup> Lenin wrote that imperialist war "stuns and breaks some people, but enlightens and tempers others. Taken by and large . . . the number and strength of the second kind of people have—with the exception of individual cases . . .—proved greater than those of the former kind."<sup>3</sup>

In that sense, the First and Second World Wars which brought mankind untold loss of life, material resources and cultural values, naturally evoked a sharp rise in the revolutionary movement, which, in 1917, had led to the Russian Revolution and, after the Second World War, to the detachment of several countries in Europe and Asia from the imperialist system. Yet Marxists-Leninists have never maintained that war engenders revolution.

The foes of the Leninist party ascribed to the Communists a desire for war to start as quickly as possible because, they said, only war could speed revolution. Lenin roundly condemned such assertions. While he regarded the world imperialist war as a very important factor in the maturing of a revolutionary outburst, he also categorically rejected the assumptions of political adventurists that revolution could occur only in wartime.

<sup>1</sup> K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* (in three volumes), Vol. 2, p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 160.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 216.



Today, various defectors from Marxism again reiterate that revolution cannot occur without war. These ridiculous ideas are often used by Maoists and other "Left"-wing revisionists, who falsely interpret Lenin in endeavouring to mask their striving for military adventure.

In reality, the Leninist revolutionary theory and practice have nothing in common with such assertions. Even before the imperialist First World War, Lenin, in a conversation with the Polish journalist Alfred Majkosen, was asked whether he wanted to see war in Europe; he replied: "No, I do not . . . I am doing and shall continue to do everything in my power to prevent mobilisation and war. I do not want millions of proletarians to shoot one another and pay for the stupidity of capitalism with their own blood. That is my attitude on that issue. . . . Objectively to foresee war and, in the event of it occurring, to aim to use it in the best possible way is one thing. . . . To want war or to work to bring it about is quite another."<sup>1</sup>

Marxists-Leninists have never replaced practical organisation of the common people for struggle against imperialist wars by verbal declarations, because "the theoretical admission that war is criminal, the socialists cannot condone war, etc., turn out to be empty phrases, because there is nothing concrete in them".<sup>2</sup> Following the advice of Lenin, his followers show up the true face of all those false "friends of peace" who attempt, by sophistry and crude distortion of the facts, to justify the aggressive acts of the imperialists and to portray them as measures for upholding peace.

A clear-cut class approach to such complex social phenomena as world and local wars demands a specific historical evaluation of wars from the viewpoint of the vital interests of the world liberation movement. The nature of the inter-relationship between the revolutionary process and problems of peace also cannot be defined without a comprehensive study of the whole complex of conditions that have engendered a given armed confrontation. Various wars influence social progress quite differently. Some hinder the

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from Yu. Seradsky, *Polskiye gody Lenina*, Gospolitizdat, Moscow, 1963, p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 448.

revolutionary transformation of the world, render the working classes helpless, undermine their vital force and temporarily halt the revolutionary onslaught on the exploiting system. Others, on the contrary, serve as a powerful means of getting rid of reactionary regimes and establishing genuine popular power.

In the Marxist-Leninist interpretation, war unleashed by imperialists pursues such predatory aims as gaining other people's land and enslaving the peoples, bankrupting competitive rivals and plundering national wealth; at the same time, it has the aim of upholding the class rule of the monopoly bourgeoisie. In launching a predatory war, the imperialists have the intention of "distracting the attention of the working masses from the internal political crises . . . disuniting and nationalist stultification of the workers, and the extermination of their vanguard so as to weaken the revolutionary movement of the proletariat".<sup>1</sup>

After 1917, the imperialist aggressors set themselves the task of destroying, by war, the first worker-peasant state; after the 1940's, their main aim was forcibly to undermine and destroy the whole world socialist system. That is the main imperialist reasoning in regard to war, from which stems the corresponding class position of the proletariat in regard to that type of war. That position demands the mobilisation of all anti-war forces for the defence of peace.

The vital interests of the working class also determine its attitude to completely different wars—progressive liberation wars against imperialist domination. By contrast with pacifists, who essentially advocate non-resistance to exploiters, Marxists have always regarded the revolutionary wars of the proletariat and the national liberation armed struggles of oppressed peoples as just and progressive wars which must be given all possible support. Marxists have elaborated a military programme of proletarian revolution defining ways and means of the revolutionary masses undertaking armed struggle in a situation which excludes the possibility of taking power by peaceful, unarmed methods.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 21, p. 27.



## 2. Just and Unjust Wars, the Military Programme of Proletarian Revolution

An abstract approach to wars is at odds with the very essence of Marxism. Lenin insistently demanded that, in defining its position in relation to a given war, the revolutionary party should first appraise "the class character of the war: what caused that war, what classes are waging it, and what historical and historico-economic conditions gave rise to it . . . what classes staged and directed it".<sup>1</sup> Consequently, every war has to be viewed in its concrete and historical perspective, from a class standpoint.

Basing himself on the vital interests of the world revolutionary movement, Lenin developed the Marxist doctrine of just and unjust wars: the nature of wars depends upon the essence of the policy pursued by the ruling classes of a country before the war. Exploiting classes which, before the war, pursued a policy of oppression by comparatively "peaceful" means, i.e., without the mass use of force, continue the same policy in wartime but now using their armed forces. That is the class essence of unjust and predatory wars.

The preparation for aggressive wars is usually closely associated with the onset of reaction within capitalist countries. The monopoly élite steps up its foreign political expansion and, at the same time, steps up the exploitation of the people within the country, fans racial discrimination and cultivates crude coercion. In post-war years, militarism has grown to unprecedented proportions in the capitalist world. Militarisation of the economy puts an immense burden upon the labouring population; the grand achievements of science and technology are put to destructive use. That is why the policy of imperialism provokes such a sharp intensification of the class struggle: "That is why the struggle for peace merges with the struggle for the freedom of the peoples, for progress and democracy, for deliverance from alien domination, from colonialism and neocolonialism, reaction and fascist dictatorship."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, p. 398.

<sup>2</sup> *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow 1969*, p. 48.

Just wars have a completely different character. They are conducted to overthrow exploiting regimes and preserve the gains of socialist revolution, to attain national independence and to defend one's own country from hostile incursions. There lies the social and political reasoning behind just revolutionary wars.

Lenin indicated three types of just wars: civil wars against exploiters; wars in defence of the socialist homeland, and national liberation wars. They all undermine the foundations of imperialism, bring closer the ultimate end to social inequality and class coercion, and encourage the world revolutionary process. Marxist-Leninist parties vigorously support these wars and act as the militant vanguard of the people rising in armed struggle.

Civil war arises at a time of social revolution in certain circumstances of its development. The many years of experience of the world revolutionary movement have borne out the truth of the Marxist-Leninist proposition concerning the peaceful and non-peaceful paths of the proletariat establishing state power. Neither the clamorous renunciation of civil wars, typical of the Right-wing opportunists, nor the advocacy of such wars as the only method of struggle for socialism, typical of "Left"-wing revisionists, can serve as a guide in the struggle for the victory of socialist revolution.

Civil war is intended to resolve the key question of any revolution—that of power—when the insurgent oppressed classes have no other means. It is intended to consolidate that power by the forcible suppression of the resistance of the overthrown exploiting classes, if the latter will not lay down their arms and refrain from counter-revolutionary attempts to restore the old order. Under such circumstances, Marxism views civil war as "the only war that is legitimate, just and sacred . . . war of the oppressed to overthrow the oppressors and liberate the working people from all oppression".<sup>1</sup>

If civil war does occur after the peaceful or non-peaceful overthrow of the exploiting classes, it is always the latter who start it. In striving to restore their political and economic

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 26, p. 401.



supremacy, the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie are the first to take up arms. It was, for example, the exploiting classes overthrown by the Russian Revolution who unleashed a bloody civil war, which differed from civil wars elsewhere by the scale and degree of ferocity of class struggle, by the length and breadth of battle operations; yet it had common features characteristic in all civil wars. Civil war is accompanied by a sharp class stratification of the population. As Lenin remarked, it turns previous class struggles "into an armed struggle of one class against another".<sup>1</sup>

The leading role of the proletariat and its Marxist-Leninist party is the most important factor in the victory of the revolutionary classes in civil wars. Other factors include: the ability of this party to mobilise wide sections of the working people for armed repulsion of the enemy; the presence of a trained and disciplined army with high morale; rational organisation of the whole economy with account for the needs of the front; merciless suppression of counter-revolutionary rebellions and conspiracies in the rear of the revolutionary army; development of a guerrilla warfare behind enemy lines. Like a revolutionary uprising, civil war of the working class against the bourgeoisie must be an offensive not a defensive exercise and conducted according to all the laws of warfare.

A fierce class struggle on a world-wide scale flares up around civil wars. International reaction often resorts to naked intervention and gives every assistance to the internal counter-revolutionaries. Under those circumstances, the more effective support is to the revolutionary forces from the socialist states and the international working class, the more likely are the workers to triumph in civil wars.

Wars in defence of the socialist homeland and of the gains of world socialism are *just* wars in our epoch. The idea of defending the socialist homeland comes from Lenin's conclusion about the possibility of the victory of proletarian revolution initially in a few or even in a single country. He wrote: "This is bound to create not only friction, but a direct attempt on the part of the bourgeoisie of other countries to crush the socialist state's victorious proletariat. In such cases,

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 29.

a war on our part would be a legitimate and just war. It would be a war for socialism, for the liberation of other nations from the bourgeoisie."<sup>1</sup>

In defending the socialist homeland, the working class and the mass of working people are helping to further the whole world liberation movement. In such a war, the national interests of the proletarian state are combined with its international duty. The Soviet Union has had to withstand frequent attacks from international imperialism virtually throughout its history; it has thereby defended and strengthened the basis for the entire world revolution. "... Our task now," wrote Lenin, "is to maintain, protect and uphold this force of socialism, this torch of socialism, this source of socialism which is so actively influencing the whole world."<sup>2</sup>

The substance of just wars was enriched with the appearance of the world socialist system. The communist and workers' parties at the International Meeting in 1969 developed the Leninist ideas of defence of a socialist homeland and came to the important conclusion that "the defence of socialism is an internationalist duty of all Communists".<sup>3</sup> The Meeting emphasised that the appearance of the socialist world was a component part of world class battles. To the extent that the enemies of socialism do not stop their attempts to undermine the foundations of socialist state power and restore their own domination, it is necessary constantly to be concerned with the steady growth in the defensive capacity of the socialist states and their close co-operation in matters of defence. The military and economic might of the USSR and the entire socialist community is an earnest of peace for all those who are fighting against the threat of a new world war. L. I. Brezhnev said at the same Meeting: "By defending socialism and peace, we are defending the future of mankind."<sup>4</sup>

Lenin included national liberation wars in the category of just wars. He roundly condemned attempts by those who

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 23, p. 79.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 28, p. 31.

<sup>3</sup> *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow 1969*, p. 23.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 146.



vulgarised Marxism by separating the national liberation movement from the proletarian class struggle and counterposed one to the other. Marxism has nothing in common with a renunciation of the importance of national liberation wars, as a powerful component of the world socialist revolution, or with an unjustified exaggeration of their role in the world liberation process.

The characteristic features of modern national liberation wars are, first, that they take place in more favourable external circumstances than at any time in the past. The moral and material aid given by the socialist states and the support of the international working class guarantee good prospects for victory to the peoples combating imperialism. Second, the armed uprisings of peoples in the colonies and dependencies are now supplemented by wars of the newly liberated states against the neocolonialists trying to re-establish the old regimes. Third, national liberation wars, even more than before, bear the stamp of anti-imperialist and democratic revolutions, for with the formation of the world socialist system a real possibility has appeared for non-capitalist development in the newly liberated states.

The need for backing these wars from the socialist states and the international working class follows from the Marxist-Leninist evaluation of national liberation wars and their role in the world revolutionary process. L. I. Brezhnev has said: "The Soviet Union, together with other socialist countries, holds active positions in the wide and seething front of the national liberation movement, and renders firm political support and moral and material help to the peoples fighting for liberation."<sup>1</sup>

The revolutionary military programme includes the following points: the formation of armed forces of revolution, military and technical training, mastery of the art of armed struggle, revolutionary work in the forces for the purpose of winning them over to the side of the people, military and political leadership by the party of revolutionary forces and armed defence of the gains of socialist revolution.

The military programme of proletarian revolution was

<sup>1</sup> *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow 1969*, p. 170.

formed with the development of the liberation struggle of the international working class. In their analysis of the lessons of the Paris Commune, Marx and Engels put forward the idea of organised proletarian armed struggle and made the point that it must be conducted by a class revolutionary force that would smash the bourgeois militarist machine. The Bolsheviks not only adopted this idea, they even elaborated a military programme of proletarian revolution. The resolutions, composed by Lenin, of the Third Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party set the beginning of this programme; the Congress had met to decide the immediate problems of the first Russian Revolution of 1905.

Not a single educated Marxist, Lenin wrote in his article "Revolutionary Army and Revolutionary Government", ever doubted the huge importance of military craft, military technique and military organisation as weapons which the working classes can use in the great historical confrontations. Revolutionary Social-Democrats, he stressed, "never stopped to playing at military conspiracies; [they]... never gave prominence to military questions until the actual conditions of civil war had arisen. But *now* all Social-Democrats have advanced the military questions... and they are putting great stress on studying these questions and bringing them to the knowledge of the masses."<sup>1</sup>

Among other democratic demands, Marxists proclaimed the replacement of the standing army, which served the exploiting state, by a people's militia or the armed people. The Bolsheviks considered this an important point in their programme in the period preceding the Great October Socialist Revolution.

The course of the struggle in Russia during the initial period of civil war and intervention showed that without a regular army it would have been impossible to uphold the revolutionary gains. The workers' Red Guard and the people's militia played a historic role in establishing proletarian dictatorship and defending the revolutionary regime in the first months of Soviet power, and constituted the

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 8, p. 563.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 565.



nucleus of the regular worker-peasant Red Army—the first army of a new socialist type.

The need for a standing army stems from the rapid development of military technology, science and techniques. Irregular revolutionary armed detachments that may operate successfully in conditions of partisan warfare may serve only as an auxiliary force in large-scale actions against a well-trained and technically well-equipped army. It would be unthinkable today to count on a military victory without a sufficient number of well-trained fighting men. Only people with an excellent knowledge of modern weapons can take charge of them and a comparatively lengthy period of military training is needed to conduct a successful battle. This is only possible if there is a standing well-trained army. Socialism has now well-organised socialist armed forces, equipped with the latest weapons, to stand up to imperialist armies.

Strict military discipline and one-man command in the revolutionary army strengthen its fighting capacity. The main distinguishing features of a revolutionary army are the model political consciousness of its fighting men and their boundless devotion to their socialist homeland, their readiness to fight at any moment in the defence of state interests. The high morale of the soldiers of revolution is supported and strengthened by the communist party, whose emissaries conduct daily political work in the ranks.

The military programme, worked out by Lenin on the experience of three Russian revolutions and the immediate years after October 1917, still serves as a model of bold use of Marxist revolutionary theory in the tactics of proletarian armed struggle leading to a decisive assault on capitalism and upholding revolutionary gains from the encroachments of internal and international reactionaries. As the revolutionary process extended to engulf new countries, the tactics of armed struggle were enriched, the arsenal of military weapons augmented and the methods of conducting military operations perfected. While not having space to describe here all the characteristics of present-day armed clashes that arise during open revolutionary popular risings, let us note some of the more essential features of the revolutionary battles today.

First, they are taking place in a situation of confrontation of the two world social systems. Not a single important revolutionary uprising or liberation war, no matter where it is, can avoid attempts by international imperialism to launch armed intervention against that country. The socialist states, on their side, render all possible assistance and support for the liberation struggle in averting or aborting the export of counter-revolution. Often the outcome of armed struggle in revolutionary war depends on the balance of the two main world forces.

Second, revolutionary battles are taking place with the use of more refined weapons than in the past. The working class and its allies, in preparing to take power by armed means, are faced more acutely than ever by the problem of mastering complex military technology (artillery, tanks, aircraft, air defence weapons, warships, etc.). It is practically impossible to resolve this task without winning over at least part of the regular army with its military equipment to the side of the insurgents. This problem may be most important at the initial moment of insurrection.

Third, experience in conducting guerrilla warfare, accumulated by the Soviet people since the Civil War, has attained great significance today. Guerrilla warfare acquired particular scope in the nazi-occupied areas of the Soviet Union and other parts of Europe. Today, it may be applied on a wider scale than ever before in parts of Latin America, Asia and Africa. Military operations by guerrilla detachments are common for countries with an overwhelmingly peasant population and a suitable geographical situation (hills, forests and other almost inaccessible areas). But the experience of recent decades has once again confirmed that guerrilla actions do not lead to victory over the main forces of the enemy without sufficiently strong ties with broad sections of the people, without strong support bases and without regular replenishment of manpower and weapons. As before, guerrilla warfare can help revolution be successful in combination with other forms of revolutionary onslaught by the working class and broad sections of the people under the leadership of a militant proletarian party.



### 3. Peaceful Coexistence and World Revolution

The birth of socialism heralded radical changes in international relations. It provided a stable base for peace. Throughout their history, the Soviet Union and other socialist states have steadily and consistently pursued a policy based on the Leninist principle of peaceful coexistence between states with different social systems.

War and capitalism are indivisible. Peaceful coexistence may be forced upon it by socialism, for which a policy based on peaceful coexistence emanates from its very essence. In conformity with the idea that the simultaneous triumph of socialist revolution was impossible in all capitalist states, Lenin foresaw that for a whole historical epoch when bourgeois and pre-bourgeois states will have to coexist alongside the socialist states they will have to arrange peaceful relations between each other. Of course, Lenin did not harbour the slightest illusions about the intentions of imperialism striving to destroy the first socialist state in the world. But even in the years of great trial, when 14 imperialist states tried to strangle the Soviet Republic at birth by armed intervention and economic blockade, Lenin did not doubt that the peaceful coexistence policy would win the day. When the time came to take stock of the Civil War that had just ended in victory, Lenin could proudly proclaim: "... we are in a position of having won conditions enabling us to exist side by side with capitalist powers, who are now compelled to enter into trade relations with us."<sup>1</sup>

Peaceful coexistence became possible as a result of the vigorous activity of the Soviet Communist Party and the Soviet Government supported by millions of working people. They had to fight for a peaceful period to begin. In November 1917, Lenin warned, "it is highly naive to think that peace can be easily attained, and that the bourgeoisie will hand it to us on a platter as soon as we mention it".<sup>2</sup> A new stage of history began only after bloody battles against the imperialist interventionists and their agents in

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 412.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 26, p. 345.

Russia, when "we have won the right to our fundamental international existence in the network of capitalist states".<sup>1</sup>

After the defeat of foreign military intervention and the attempts of internal reactionaries to stage a counter-revolutionary coup, the imperialists were forced to reckon with the growing might of Soviet Russia, with the resolution of the international working class not to permit any new interventions and with the need to re-establish international economic relations. Lenin said: "There is a force more powerful than the wishes, the will and the decisions of any of the governments or classes that are hostile to us. That force is world general economic relations, which compel them to make contact with us."<sup>2</sup>

The Leninist idea of the correlation of objective and subjective factors of peaceful coexistence and the prevailing role of the former has profound reasoning behind it. The fact is that petty-bourgeois revolutionaries either completely ignore the will and wishes of the capitalist classes or greatly exaggerate this subjective factor. In one instance, they say that peaceful coexistence is undesirable to the revolutionary movement because the policy of imperialism, that "paper tiger", is of no account; in the second case, they claim that peaceful coexistence is impossible because the enemy will no doubt ignore it.

By comparison with the views of the doctrinaire petty-bourgeois philosophers and the "Left"-wing revisionists, the Leninist policy of peaceful coexistence is based on objective factors that favour peaceful coexistence, such as the unceasing growth of the economic and defensive potential of the socialist system, international proletarian solidarity, the existence of world-wide economic relations and acute contradictions between imperialist states. It does not, of course, ignore the subjective intentions of the international bourgeoisie and the various views on war and peace within the ruling circles of imperialist powers.

Lenin never took the principle of peaceful coexistence for granted, insofar as he believed that, due to the balance

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 31, p. 412.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 33, p. 155.



of power, the imperialists were bound to unleash an aggressive war against the Soviet state. Further prospects for maintaining peace depended on the ability of the Soviet people to uphold their revolutionary gains and on the further development of the world revolutionary process and the conversion of socialism into an international system capable of exerting a decisive influence on all world politics.

In 1941, peaceful coexistence was broken by the armed attack by Nazi Germany on the Soviet Union, with the ruling circles of the USA, Britain and France conniving at the aggression. But, contrary to the short-sighted reckoning of the imperialists in those states, before German fascism attacked the USSR, it had turned its weapons against them. Being the victims of aggression, the capitalist states had to conclude a military alliance with the socialist state against the Nazis.

The Leninist peaceful coexistence policy, consistently pursued by the first socialist state in the pre-war years, enabled the USSR to become strong and withstand the war, exploit to the utmost the contradictions within the imperialist camp and triumph over fascism.

The huge social and political changes in the world as a result of this triumph led to the formation of the world socialist system, a mighty upsurge in revolutionary struggle in the capitalist states and the crumbling of colonialism under attack from the national liberation movement.

After the war, the Soviet Union continued to implement a policy based on the Leninist principle of peaceful coexistence. In the new circumstances, however, this policy took on a new form since far-reaching changes had occurred in the world balance of power.

Events showed that, after the proletarian dictatorship had outgrown its national framework and spread to other countries, the basis for peaceful coexistence was even more extensive. This undoubtedly was to the advantage of world socialism. The Leninist forecast had come true that, while the victory of the proletariat in a single country did not yet enable it to influence the international political situation, the establishment of proletarian power in at least a few countries would enable it to exert a decisive impact on the whole world political situation.

The socialist states employ their influence largely to conduct an active foreign policy, to ensure international security and to immobilise the aggressive forces of imperialism. In that noble cause, they earn the profound sympathy of progressives throughout the world and, especially, the energetic backing of the international proletariat. By their vigorous actions in defence of peace, the working people in capitalist states show how right Lenin was in expressing the conviction that they "will understand the duty that now faces them of saving mankind from the horrors of war and its consequences, that these workers, by comprehensive, determined and supremely vigorous action, will help us to conclude peace successfully, and at the same time emancipate the labouring and exploited masses of our population from all forms of slavery and all forms of exploitation".<sup>1</sup>

As we can see, Lenin did not counterpose the peaceful coexistence policy to the interests of the international proletarian revolution. On the contrary, he made success of the peaceful coexistence policy dependent upon the most vigorous support of the world working class; he closely combined the prospects for revolution with the positive results of that policy.

The fight for peaceful coexistence against the aggressive policy of imperialism, the class struggle of the proletariat in the capitalist states, the national liberation movements and the strengthening of socialism are all mutually connected phenomena of contemporary social affairs. The interrelationship of the peaceful coexistence policy and the world revolutionary process is most important in the contemporary economic, social, political and ideological struggle between socialism and capitalism.

In the situation of peaceful coexistence, socialism ties the hands of the imperialists, restricts their possibilities for exporting counter-revolution, broadens the opportunity for rendering political, economic and military aid to the peoples and countries fighting for their national and social freedom.

The influence of the world socialist system on the revolutionary process much depends on whether the Marxist-Leninist parties in power "are establishing completely differ-

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 252.



ent international relations".<sup>1</sup> The Theses published to mark the Lenin centenary state that socialism contrasts the Leninist policy of peace and friendship to the imperialist policy of war and aggression and enslavement of other countries and peoples: "The socialist foreign policy has helped and is helping to draw the masses of the people into a more and more active struggle for the triumph of just, democratic principles in international relations."<sup>2</sup>

The socialist states are tirelessly fighting for peace, peaceful conditions for building socialism and communism, creating a more favourable atmosphere for the liberation struggle of the working people of all countries, and for the social and economic progress of all peoples. Peaceful coexistence greatly helps to bring that about. "At the same time, Lenin pointed out, the peaceful coexistence of countries with opposite systems means a sharp political, economic and ideological struggle between socialism and capitalism, between the working class and the bourgeoisie. It has nothing in common with class peace and leaves no doubt about the sacred right of the oppressed peoples to employ every means in their fight for liberation, up to and including armed struggle. The Soviet Union is continuing to support the just war for liberation of the Vietnamese people against American imperialism and the just wars of other peoples subjected to imperialist aggression."<sup>3</sup>

Peaceful coexistence helps to create conditions in the capitalist states that would enable the revolutionary masses, led by the working class, successfully to contend with the monopoly bourgeoisie. The policy of the socialist states, based on the principle of peaceful coexistence, firmly rebuffs imperialist attempts to undermine the revolutionary movement and is an important part of the fight against imperialism.

Revisionists propagate the theory of the "dying down" of the class struggle and often support their arguments by reference to peaceful coexistence. They ignore the quite unambiguous explanation given by the CPSU and other com-

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 477.

<sup>2</sup> *On the Centenary of the Birth of V. I. Lenin*, p. 42.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

munist parties that "peaceful coexistence is not applicable to the relations between oppressors and the oppressed, between colonialists and the victims of colonial oppression".<sup>1</sup> As the facts show, the peaceful coexistence policy pursued by the socialist states does not hamper the radicalisation of the working people in Western Europe and America; it actually accelerates it and encourages the class struggle of the proletariat.

The peaceful coexistence policy also does not replace the class struggle within the capitalist states, because the class struggle is the result of the internal contradictions of capitalism, or in the international arena which represents a specific form of class struggle in contemporary international circumstances. The 1969 Meeting stated that "the attempts of imperialism to overcome its internal contradictions by building up international tension and creating hotbeds of war are hampered by the policy of peaceful coexistence. This policy does not imply either the preservation of the socio-political status quo or a weakening of the ideological struggle. It helps to promote the class struggle against imperialism on a national and world-wide scale."<sup>2</sup> In conditions of peaceful coexistence, more favourable circumstances develop for uniting all democratic forces in a political alliance capable of defeating reaction.

A policy based on peaceful coexistence encourages the revolutionary activity of the peoples in the world socialist community who are building socialism and communism; it enables them to use the advantages of the socialist mode of production more fully and effectively and to mark up fresh successes in the competition between the two systems. The world socialist system has become "a powerful accelerator of historical progress" and "the decisive force in the anti-imperialist struggle".<sup>3</sup> Socialism is the vanguard of the revolutionary movement. The entry of socialism on to the world scene has therefore enhanced the revolutionary possibilities of the proletariat in the capitalist states and opened up new prospects for national liberation movements.

<sup>1</sup> 23rd Congress of the CPSU, Moscow, 1966, pp. 50, 51.

<sup>2</sup> *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties*, Moscow 1969, p. 31.

<sup>3</sup> 24th Congress of the CPSU, p. 9.



At the present stage of the competition between the two systems, the economic policy of socialism in creating the material and technological basis of a new society, superior to the capitalist productive forces, acts as a major lever of influence on the revolutionary process. Lenin said that "once we solve this problem, we shall have certainly and finally won on an international scale".<sup>1</sup> Another aspect of socialist impact on world revolution is "support of the revolutionary movement of the socialist proletariat in the advanced countries. . . . Support of the democratic and revolutionary movement in all countries in general, and especially in the colonies and dependent countries".<sup>2</sup>

"Left"-wing revisionists adhere to a different point of view. They believe that peaceful coexistence is a concession to imperialism, a deal with it behind the backs of the working class. From this false anti-scientific premise, they draw the conclusion that peaceful coexistence hampers the world revolutionary process. They view a new world war as a beneficial historical event which should be welcomed not decried.

The views of the "Left"-wing revisionists are divorced from reality. The present is characterised by a mounting struggle of the working class both for a better economic status and for the implementation of its political demands. These demands are more and more often directed against the system of monopoly capital domination and against the political power of the monopolies. The large-scale battles of the working class are shaking the power of the monopolies and intensifying the contradictions of capitalist society.

The struggle for peace and the averting of a new world war remains one of the most important strategic tasks of the international communist movement. But Communists have never advocated peace in general—i.e., a universal class peace. What the "Left"-wing revisionists forget and deliberately pass over in silence is that, simultaneously with the pursuit of a policy of peaceful coexistence, the communist parties and peoples of the socialist states pursue a consistent

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 437.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 27, pp. 157-58.

policy of comprehensive support for revolutionary struggle of the workers and other groups of working people in the capitalist states. Communists believe that "determined class struggle for the abolition of the monopolies and their rule, for the institution of a genuinely democratic system, and for the establishment of socialist power, whatever may be the road leading to this goal, is an inalienable right and duty of the working people and their communist parties in the capitalist countries".<sup>1</sup>

As the facts indicate, the aggressiveness of imperialist governments is accompanied by a strengthening of reaction. On the other hand, an international détente weakens the positions of militarism and the most reactionary circles associated with it. Sober realistic trends are coming to the fore and the possibilities for a democratisation of social affairs in capitalist countries are expanding. More favourable conditions are forming for winning over the majority of the people to the side of socialist change.

Many years' experience shows that the policy pursued by the socialist states and based, on the one hand, on the Leninist principle of peaceful coexistence and, on the other, on consistent support for liberation movements, also encourages the growth of the national liberation struggle as a component of the world revolutionary process. The role of the anti-imperialist movement of the Afro-Asian peoples continues to grow in this process. The conflict of the young working class, the peasants and other democratic and revolutionary forces in these countries against imperialism and the forces of internal reaction is intensifying.

In most young independent states of Africa and Asia, the central problem of social development, alongside the task of consolidating political independence, is the struggle to overcome economic backwardness. The tackling of this problem depends on the implementation of far-reaching social and economic changes, of agrarian reforms, the elimination of feudal and pre-feudal relations and of the domination of foreign monopolies, and the democratisation of social and political life and of the state apparatus. The

<sup>1</sup> *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow 1969*, p. 81.



trend towards progressive social development in the young newly liberated states is growing and the role of the revolutionary democratic forces is increasing in a situation of peaceful coexistence and revolutionary support from the socialist states.

Peaceful coexistence creates serious obstacles to the imperialists, who strive to regain their lost positions in the newly emergent countries. The frequent attempts by ex-colonial powers—and new claimants to their throne—to suppress the national liberation movement in Asia and Africa have encountered and are encountering determined resistance both from the peoples recently liberated from colonialism and from the socialist states. The peaceful coexistence policy pursued by the socialist states is not a passive sermon of peace. It includes demonstration of their firm resolve to uphold and defend the gains of the national liberation struggle and revolution when they are threatened by the aggressive actions of the imperialists.

The defeat of Israeli aggression against the Arab countries in the Middle East is a vivid illustration of this situation. The American-backed Israeli aggressors had planned by force of arms to overthrow progressive regimes in a number of Arab states, to impose their own political and economic dictation on these countries and make them an obedient tool in the fight against peace, progress and socialism. Thanks to the decisive actions of the Arab peoples, the support and backing for these actions from the Soviet Union and other socialist states, these plans have failed miserably. What happened was what the imperialist aggressors expected least of all: the consolidation of progressive and revolutionary forces, the acceleration of democratic reforms in many Arab states, the strengthening of national unity of the Arab peoples in their fight against imperialism and the further promotion of friendly relations with the socialist states.

There is, however, another view of the part played by peaceful coexistence in the struggle of the newly liberated states for freedom and economic independence. This view is expressed by "Left"-wing revisionists. They would like to push the Soviet Union and other socialist states into immediate armed struggle against imperialism, maintaining

that this would put an end to imperialism and its oppression and open the way for the independent states to move from capitalism to socialism more quickly. They suggest not peaceful coexistence, but the fanning of local wars in various parts of the world and their combining into a world-wide conflagration that would bring about the final victory of socialism.

Views of that sort radically contradict the objective laws of development of the world today. Those responsible for adventurist appeals to launch a war between socialist and capitalist states so as to ease the transition of the young newly liberated states to socialism take up a subjective, unscientific and essentially anti-revolutionary stance. For them, the war of socialism against capitalism is only a means of stepping up the national liberation movement which, they aver, is the decisive revolutionary force today. Many "Left"-wing revisionists altogether reject the historic mission of the working class in the capitalist states. They thereby divide the dialectical unity of the world revolutionary process and two of its key components—the world socialist system and the working class in the capitalist states—are ascribed either purely military-destructive or passive functions.

Experience has shown convincingly that peaceful coexistence is a major trend of world development due to the emergence of the communist social and economic formation and the development of the world revolutionary process. On the one hand, peaceful coexistence is a specific form of the class struggle between socialism and capitalism, of the historic advance of socialism at the expense of capitalism, undermining its positions throughout the world. On the other, peaceful coexistence presupposes the application in international relations of the principles of equality and mutual understanding between states with different social systems, non-interference in internal affairs, recognition of independence, respect for sovereignty and the territorial integrity of all countries. Peaceful coexistence entails the renunciation of war as a means of resolving international disputes, their settlement through negotiation. More succinctly, peaceful coexistence presupposes a struggle between the two systems, yet excludes war between them. Leonid Brezhnev has said: "Peaceful coexistence does not extend to the strug-



gle of ideologies—this must be stressed most categorically. At the same time, it does not boil down merely to an absence of war between socialist and capitalist states. Observance of the peaceful coexistence principle opens up broader possibilities for expanding relations between them. This includes settlement, at the negotiating table, of international problems, coordination of measures for reducing the war danger and easing international tensions, and also mutually advantageous economic, trade, scientific, technical and cultural ties.”<sup>1</sup>

Peaceful coexistence, while being an objective need of mutual relations between countries today, does not presuppose either the preservation of the social and political status quo between them or any let-up in the ideological struggle. It helps to promote the class struggle within the capitalist states and national liberation movement. Peaceful coexistence implies firm resistance to imperialist encroachments upon the freedom and independence of the peoples and any attempts to undermine the revolutionary movement. It is an important way to combat imperialism. The duration of peaceful coexistence depends on the balance of power between socialism and capitalism: today, with a new balance of power, the possibilities have grown considerably for resolving international disputes peacefully. This is testified to by the success of the Soviet Union and other socialist states in the fight to reduce international tension and to resolve disputed issues peacefully. The Soviet Union is opposing the aggressive actions of imperialism with a vigorous defence of peace and a strengthening of international security, a policy conducted within the framework of relations based on the peaceful coexistence principle. The 24th CPSU Congress formulated the basic tasks of the campaign for peace and friendship among nations today. This Congress-approved foreign policy is today referred to as the Soviet Peace Programme.

Lenin looked upon peaceful coexistence “as a temporary state, until such time as the entire world abandons private property and the economic chaos and wars engendered by

<sup>1</sup> International Meeting of Communist and Workers’ Parties, Moscow 1969, p. 170.

it for the higher property system”.<sup>1</sup> This is immanent in the era of transition from capitalism to socialism. As the new social system expands, international relations will increasingly be determined by a policy based on socialist internationalism. Until the complete defeat of contemporary capitalism, however, the peaceful coexistence policy is intended to ensure that a new world war is averted and to facilitate the world revolutionary process.

#### 4. Real Possibilities of Averting World War Today

Present-day capitalism, as a social system based on class antagonism, breeds predatory wars. In an era when the contradictions of the bourgeois system are reaching their zenith, wars for the forcible repartition of the world are becoming more and more destructive and dangerous for the whole of mankind. This danger is heightened with the appearance of new weapons of mass destruction and with the drawing of vast masses of people on all continents into the orbit of a possible global war. Vast numbers of people, whose vital interests are expressed by the international working class and its revolutionary parties, are intimately concerned to avert imperialist wars.

Human civilisation must be saved from the terrifying consequences of a modern war of annihilation. Both world imperialism and world socialism possess nuclear missiles and other weapons of mass destruction, but the threat to mankind comes solely from imperialism. The extremist circles of imperialist reaction harbour the notion of using any means, including weapons of mass destruction, to achieve their aims. In the hands of world socialism, thermo-nuclear weapons have become an effective means of deterring the aggressor. In approaching the problem of the inevitability of wars in the imperialist period, Marxists have always made an analysis of the changing balance of power between the forces of peace and those of war in every situation. Only such an analysis has enabled them to decide how real is the threat of imperialists unleashing wars.

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 357.



The document written by Lenin in 1916 and entitled "Objections to G. Zinoviev's Comments on Articles 'Concerning the Junius Pamphlet' and 'The Summary of Discussions on Self-Determination'" is of particular interest in this connection. Lenin criticised the use of references to the inevitability of wars under imperialism to distract the working class from fighting against imperialist wars. In a dispute with Zinoviev, he posed the following question: "Is imperialist war *possible* in *any* period of the imperialist epoch?" His answer was precise and unequivocal: "No, it is not. In 1905 imperialist war between Germany and Britain (over Norway), etc., proved to be *impossible*."<sup>1</sup> Lenin demanded that people should not recklessly apply the Marxist notion of the inevitability of war to all periods of the imperialist epoch; he demanded that they should approach the issue in a specific historical way. Periods may occur when the imperialists of one country might not be able to unleash war against another country. Based on this idea, the Russian Communist Party conducted a persistent anti-war campaign before and after the proletariat took power in Russia in October 1917.

Lenin wrote that "if socialism is not victorious, peace between the capitalist states will be only a truce, an interlude, a time of preparation for a fresh slaughter of the peoples."<sup>2</sup> Only proletarian victory would bring mankind peace. But a really lasting peace, Lenin maintained, "cannot be achieved without a proletarian revolution in a number of countries."<sup>3</sup> He wrote further: "A world-wide socialist army of the revolutionary proletariat is alone capable of putting an end to this oppression and enslavement of the masses and to these massacres of slaves in the interests of the slave-owners."<sup>4</sup>

With the formation of the world socialist system, which has placed an immense obstacle in the way of imperialist wars, the Leninist idea that wars may not be inevitable has been developed in the decisions of the 20th and subsequent CPSU congresses and the three International Meetings of

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Complete Works*, Vol. 54, pp. 472-73 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 386.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 23, p. 340.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 41, p. 263.

Communist and Workers' Parties in 1957, 1960 and 1969.

These decisions have stressed that the policy of imperialist aggression would have brought mankind long ago to a world thermo-nuclear catastrophe if it had not been for the opposition of strong forces capable of averting a world war. The question of the real possibilities for avoiding wars is essentially a question of on what social forces the policy of peace can rely and whether these forces are capable of restraining the advocates of aggression and saving mankind from a thermo-nuclear catastrophe. A comprehensive account for and analysis of the balance of power in the world today between the forces of war and peace indicates that it is obviously not tilted in favour of the imperialist aggressors. The preponderance of the peace-loving forces has resulted from a steady growth in their political, economic and military potential.

The enemies of Leninism endeavour to sow doubts about the sincerity of the intentions of the socialist states to avert war. They claim that Communists are forcing the capitalist states into military conflicts among themselves. But as Lenin stressed, "all our politics and propaganda, however, are directed towards putting an end to war and in no way towards driving nations to war".<sup>1</sup>

Lenin always regarded the peace issue as "the crucial issue of today". He said: "On this issue the proletariat truly represents the *whole* nation, all live and honest people in *all* classes, the vast majority of the petty bourgeoisie; because only the proletariat, on achieving power, will *immediately* offer a just peace to all the belligerent nations, because only the proletariat will dare take genuinely *revolutionary* measures (publication of the secret treaties, and so forth) to achieve the speediest and most just peace possible."<sup>2</sup>

The terrible responsibility for destructive wars utterly and completely lies with the imperialist bourgeoisie. The two world wars alone that it has caused in the 20th century accounted for 65 million deaths. This exceeds many times the number of war casualties in the three preceding centu-

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 470.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 26, p. 99.



ries (25 million). Direct military expenditure of the antagonists in World War II amounted to the enormous sum of \$1,380,000 million. The monopolist groups during the two world wars produced many new multi-millionaires who made fabulous fortunes through military orders. The damage done to material and cultural values is immeasurably greater than that caused by natural calamities. That is the unpaid bill that history presents to imperialism.

"Socialists have always condemned wars between nations as barbarous and brutal."<sup>1</sup> These words of Lenin contain the profound humane sense of the revolutionary philosophy of Marxism. In condemning the devastating world wars of imperialism as an abominable crime, Lenin said that, in using the latest technological discoveries, these wars could "undermine the very foundations of human society."<sup>2</sup> At the same time, he said, one should never forget that wars are the handmaiden of capitalism, especially at its imperialist stage. Hence the conclusion that "wars cannot be abolished unless classes are abolished and socialism is created."<sup>3</sup> To the extent that modern monopoly capitalism, by its very nature, continues to be the source of predatory wars, and to the extent that its economic, social and political basis remains as long as the world capitalist system exists, then the danger of imperialist wars remains today. This idea was embodied in the Central Committee Report to the 24th Party Congress which stated that "the forces of aggression and militarism may have been pushed back, but they have not been rendered harmless. In the post-war years, they have started more than 30 wars and armed conflicts of varying scale. Nor is it possible to consider the threat of another world war as having been completely eliminated. It is the vital task of all the peaceable states, of all the peoples, to prevent this threat from becoming reality."<sup>4</sup>

Communists are the most active political force in the campaign to avert thermo-nuclear wars and firmly believe in the real possibility of maintaining peace. World war may

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 299.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 27, p. 422.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 21, p. 299.

<sup>4</sup> 24th Congress of the CPSU, p. 36.

be avoided by the joint efforts of the powerful community of socialist states, the international working class, the peace-loving non-socialist states and all forces that counter the aggressive plans of imperialism. Meanwhile, Communists do not forget the Marxist axiom that the final removal of the economic, political and social causes leading to wars can become possible only as a result of the victory of the new social system all over the world.

The tendency towards conflicts and wars between states operates as long as its bearer—capitalism—remains. Yet this tendency is opposed by another, growing tendency—that towards peace, which is represented by socialism. Socialism and militarism are incompatible; socialism has proved that only it can uphold peace.

The contribution of the world socialist system to the common cause of the anti-imperialist and anti-militarist struggle is above all due to its growing military and economic potential which makes it the bastion of all anti-militarist forces. Military and political co-operation between the socialist states and the coordination of their efforts to defend socialism are effective factors for peace. The consolidation and unity of the socialist states is a considerable factor in the anti-imperialist struggle, strengthening the power of the fighters for socialism and peace. The 24th Party Congress stated that "the world socialist system has been making a great contribution to the fulfilment of a task of such vital importance for all the peoples as the prevention of another world war. It is safe to say that many of the imperialist aggressors' plans were frustrated thanks to the existence of the world socialist system and its firm action".<sup>1</sup>

Another factor favouring a successful struggle against imperialist aggression is the foreign policy of the socialist states, which uses every opportunity to ease international tension. The policy of peace, Lenin said, "has increased the propaganda power of our revolution a hundred-fold".<sup>2</sup> In peaceful conditions, socialism has immeasurably more opportunities to develop its advantages over capitalism

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works* Vol. 26, p. 400.



because "any peace . . . will open channels for our influence a hundred times wider".<sup>1</sup>

Lenin combined the interests of the peace campaign with those of the triumph of world revolution. He was tirelessly concerned for defending the first socialist state—the main basis for promoting the world revolutionary process. He called for the armed forces of the Soviet Union to be strengthened in every possible way as a powerful guard over Soviet frontiers: "Safeguard the defence potential of our country, strengthen our Red Army to the utmost, and remember that we have no right to permit an instant's slackening where our workers and peasants and their gains are concerned."<sup>2</sup>

Today, when socialism has become a world system and when imperialism is mustering all its forces to undermine it and hold back world communism, Lenin's words about defending socialist gains have acquired special significance. Events have forced the Soviet Union to bear the immense responsibility for the security of the socialist camp. It is therefore natural, that, in developing our economy, we should all the time put vast sums into defence, which is necessary not only to the Soviet Union but to all socialist states. Other socialist countries are making their contribution to upholding socialist gains; in so doing, they are consistently fulfilling their internationalist duty.

The common international responsibility of the socialist states and of all revolutionary forces for the fate of world socialism is the most reliable guarantee of its international security. The defence of the revolutionary gains of the socialist community, in turn, ensures fresh success for their peoples in peaceful creative labour, helps to improve socialism and communist construction and thereby accelerates world revolution.

The revolutionary movement of the working class and the national liberation movement are powerful allies of the socialist states in their strong opposition to imperialist aggression. The class battles of the proletariat are having a marked impact on international relations, undermining the

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 453.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 33, p. 151.

forces of imperialism and strengthening those of peace. Yet another impressive political force is now operating in the international arena, interested in averting a new world war. It is the group of Latin American states and the large group of young national states in Africa and Asia, many of whom are closely co-operating with the socialist countries. Peace is a necessary condition for the fighters against imperialism and the newly liberated states in order to put an end to their dependence on imperialism and the legacy of colonialism, and in order to resolve the tasks of national renaissance. The peoples of the young national states that arose on the ruins of colonialism are joining forces in the struggle for peace.

The world-wide peace movement, associated with the growing political activity of the common people, has become a vital factor in opposing imperialist aggression. The decisive role of the common people today in the peace movement is expressed in the effort, relying on the material power of the socialist system, to prevent imperialism from unleashing a new world war. The peace movement develops in a situation of mounting class conflicts in the imperialist states, of the downfall of colonialism under the blows of national liberation revolutions and in a situation where the socialist states are having an increasingly decisive influence on the fate of mankind.

The divisive trends operating in the imperialist camp are encouraging possibilities for averting a new world war. They are discernible, first, in inter-imperialist contradictions, second, in the contradictions between extremists and moderates among the bourgeoisie. Of course, integration of all anti-communist and reactionary forces is the main trend within the imperialist camp. But the nature of capitalist ties and relations in economics and in politics causes periodic clashes of interests among the imperialist powers, which objectively helps to nip in the bud the militarist plans of imperialism. The moderate wing of the bourgeoisie retains its class nature and remains anti-communist, but tends to make a sober judgement of the world balance of power and to search for mutually acceptable solutions to world problems.

A characteristic feature of the anti-war movement is the anti-militarist position of many scientists and technologists



in the capitalist citadels, largely due to the lessons of the two world wars and the aggressive acts of imperialism since the war, and also to an appreciation of the consequences of a thermo-nuclear war.

Today, a realisation of the danger of a new war to mankind is apparent among wide sections of democratic opinion in all countries.

World development has brought substantial changes in international relations, above all in relations between socialist and capitalist states; they have affected the very basis of contemporary international relations and particularly the balance of power between the two opposed social systems. There is a trend that is clearly discernible internationally, testifying to the fact that a correlation of material and political factors is increasingly being formed in favour of world socialism, leading to the consolidation of democratic and peace-loving forces, to international détente, to a strengthening of peaceful coexistence.

The Soviet Communist Party policy, aimed at vigorously fighting for peace and security and for consolidating the anti-imperialist forces, has led to favourable changes in the struggle for peace and international security.

The nature of the present stage of the fight for peace is quite clear in the new aspects of political affairs on the European continent and of Soviet-American relations. The aims and tasks of Soviet foreign policy in settling the problems of European security are clear: final recognition of the territorial changes that took place in Europe after the war, and a sharp turn towards détente and peace in Europe. These objectives take account of the existing situation, respond to the objective requirements of European economic and political development and have encountered understanding and broad support from peace-loving people throughout the world.

Soviet-French relations are an important link in the creation of a European security system. The Soviet-French Declaration and the Principles of Co-operation Between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and France, signed in Paris, have widened the basis for a further improvement of relations and smoothing out of differences between the two countries on a number of important international issues.

Franco-Soviet co-operation has obtained even greater depth and solidity and become a permanent factor of European and world politics.

Another important link in creating and strengthening European security and world peace was the ratification of the treaties between the USSR and West Germany and between Poland and West Germany. The ratification was greeted by all who sincerely desire international détente, security, equality and mutual co-operation between states with different social systems.

The Soviet-West German and the Polish-West German treaties end the long period of tension in relations between West Germany and the Soviet Union, due to the policy of the West German leaders. The major significance of the treaties signed in Moscow and Warsaw is that they create the necessary basis for arranging good-neighbourly and peaceful relations between the USSR and Poland on the one hand, and West Germany on the other, in the interests of the peoples of these states and of reinforcing peace and friendship among the peoples of the world.

Soviet-American relations occupy a prominent place in the fight for peace. At the 24th Party Congress, the issue of Soviet-American relations took its place in the overall programme of the fight for peace and international détente. The Central Committee Report noted: "We proceed from the assumption that it is possible to improve relations between the USSR and the USA. Our principled line with respect to the capitalist countries, including the USA, is consistently and fully to practise the principles of peaceful coexistence, to develop mutually advantageous ties. . . ."<sup>1</sup>

The results of the Soviet-American Moscow summit meeting in May 1972 are among the most important events in the recent history of international relations. The leaders of the two powers proclaimed that "differences in ideology and the social systems of the USSR and USA are no hindrance to the development between them of normal relations based on the principles of sovereignty, equality, non-interference in internal affairs and mutual benefit".<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 24th Congress of the CPSU, p. 35.

<sup>2</sup> See *Pravda*, May 30, 1972.



It is important to note that the way to the present Soviet-American agreements was marked by the victory of the Leninist principle of peaceful coexistence. The document "The Basic Principles of Mutual Relations Between the USSR and the USA" is well worth reading, for it shows that both great powers, of which one represents the major power of contemporary imperialism "will act from the common conviction that in the nuclear age there does not exist any other basis for maintaining mutual relations apart from peaceful coexistence".<sup>1</sup> The Leninist forecast that improvements in the means of destruction could ultimately make war impossible is being borne out with exceptional exactitude.

The changes that have taken place in Soviet-American relations are the result of the influence of many factors: they include a more realistic evaluation of the military and political potential of socialism; a growing conviction in the futility of a policy of military adventures; the defeat of armed intervention in Vietnam; the fear of businessmen that they would be deprived of such interesting prospects as the promotion of comprehensive and mutually beneficial contacts with the socialist economy—which knows no crises; and the danger of remaining isolated even within the capitalist camp.

The talks General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee Leonid Brezhnev has had with FRG Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, US President Gerald Ford and President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing of France and the Prime Minister of Great Britain Harold Wilson, mark important progress in implementing the Peace Programme worked out by the 24th CPSU Congress.

The Soviet Communist Party and Government construct relations with the capitalist world on the principle that the class struggle between capitalism and socialism will continue in the economy, politics and ideology, because the philosophy and class objectives of socialism and capitalism are diametrically opposed and irreconcilable. But the Soviet Union sees that this historically inevitable struggle should be diverted into a channel that does not threaten with wars, dangerous conflicts or the arms race. This is a vital international

<sup>1</sup> See *Pravda*, May 30, 1972.

principle of socialism that meets the interests of peace all over the world, the basic vital interests of all peoples and all states. L. I. Brezhnev has said: "While expressing its constant wish to co-operate in safeguarding peace with all governments willing to do so, the Soviet Union has been steadily expanding co-operation with the peace-loving public, with the peoples of all countries. Ever new opportunities of promoting peace arise for public organisations and mass movements."<sup>1</sup>

\* \* \*

Down the ages, mankind has dreamed of eliminating wars, poverty and exploitation. The socialist revolution and construction are making these dreams come true. Half a century ago, Lenin wrote: "Only a proletarian socialist revolution can lead humanity out of the impasse which imperialism and imperialist wars have created. Whatever difficulties the revolution may have to encounter, whatever possible temporary setbacks or waves of counter-revolution it may have to contend with, the final victory of the proletariat is inevitable."<sup>2</sup>

The contemporary era of transition from capitalism to socialism is marked by a great expansion of the front of social forces taking part in the world revolutionary process.

The communist parties—vanguard of the working class—are playing a decisive part in promoting the world revolutionary process and building socialism and communism. They head the struggle against all forms of exploitation and oppression. It is the Communists who are fighting to get the actions of all revolutionary forces to converge into a single turbulent stream.

In accordance with Marxist-Leninist theory, Communists both explain the world scientifically and change it—from its foundation up to the very top, from the basis up to the superstructure. They have demonstrated in practice that they are capable of leading a communist reconstruction of society. Marxist-Leninist communist parties are parties of revolution-

<sup>1</sup> L. I. Brezhnev, *The Fiftieth Anniversary of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics*, Moscow, 1972, p. 60.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*. Vol. 29. p. 103.



ary action. Having become the greatest political power of the age, the communist movement has opened up new prospects for the world revolutionary process. The success of its development very much determines the settlement of the most acute problems today: averting a new world war, the social and national liberation of peoples, and the construction of socialism and communism.

With the mounting influence of world socialism on mankind's development, a special responsibility lies with the communist and workers' parties in the socialist states. The new social system possesses immense objective advantages, but they cannot be realised by themselves, automatically, without a correct policy by the Marxist-Leninist party, without its leading and directing activity. The historical experience of the USSR and other socialist states has shown that the very complex tasks of building socialism and communism can only be tackled if an experienced hand is at the wheel—that of the communist party. Only a party equipped with an understanding of the laws of social development and constructed on the basis of Leninist organisational principles is capable of uniting and mobilising popular forces for successfully resolving vital political and economic tasks and lending all creative work a purposive, scientifically grounded and planned character.

As the Soviet experience testifies, party political leadership has been the decisive condition for the comprehensive economic and social progress of socialist society. The 24th Party Congress noted that the wider the scope of creative activity and the more complex the problems which have to be tackled, the greater the role and responsibility of the party that leads the people. The party bases its leadership, in a situation of advanced socialism, on an all-round approach to developing society as an integral social organism.

A growth in the leading role of the party in building communism, being an objective natural process, depends on all its links, on its ability to mobilise its forces, exploit the initiative and collective experience of the common people, and guarantee in practice an expansion and strengthening of its guiding influence on all aspects of society. The party's loyalty to Marxism-Leninism and a creative approach to this philosophy are invariable conditions of its growing strength.

The role of communist parties in the revolutionary movement, in revolution and in building socialism and communism has acquired exceptional importance and become the focus of all contemporary ideological and political struggle. This role is very closely connected with the overall theoretical and philosophical understanding of social development in general, and with the theory of socialist revolution in particular. A one-sidedness in explaining the historical process is alien to Communists. Marxism-Leninism regards social development in a dialectical way, as a natural historical process which is determined by objective laws and, at the same time, occurs under the corresponding influence of the subjective factor—the revolutionary energy and initiative of the common people, classes and the parties and individual leaders who express the requirements of social development and the interests of advanced classes. History has vividly shown that socialist revolution and the building of socialism and communism are impossible without the communist party and its vanguard leading role.

Lenin has bequeathed us a great theoretical heritage—an inexhaustible fund of progressive ideas and historic optimism. His immortal philosophy of socialist revolution and the fight for socialism has become a battle-standard and guide for action for millions of working people and the oppressed all over the world. It inspires the peoples fighting for their social and national liberation, giving them a conviction in their victory and in the triumph of socialism and communism throughout the world.



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